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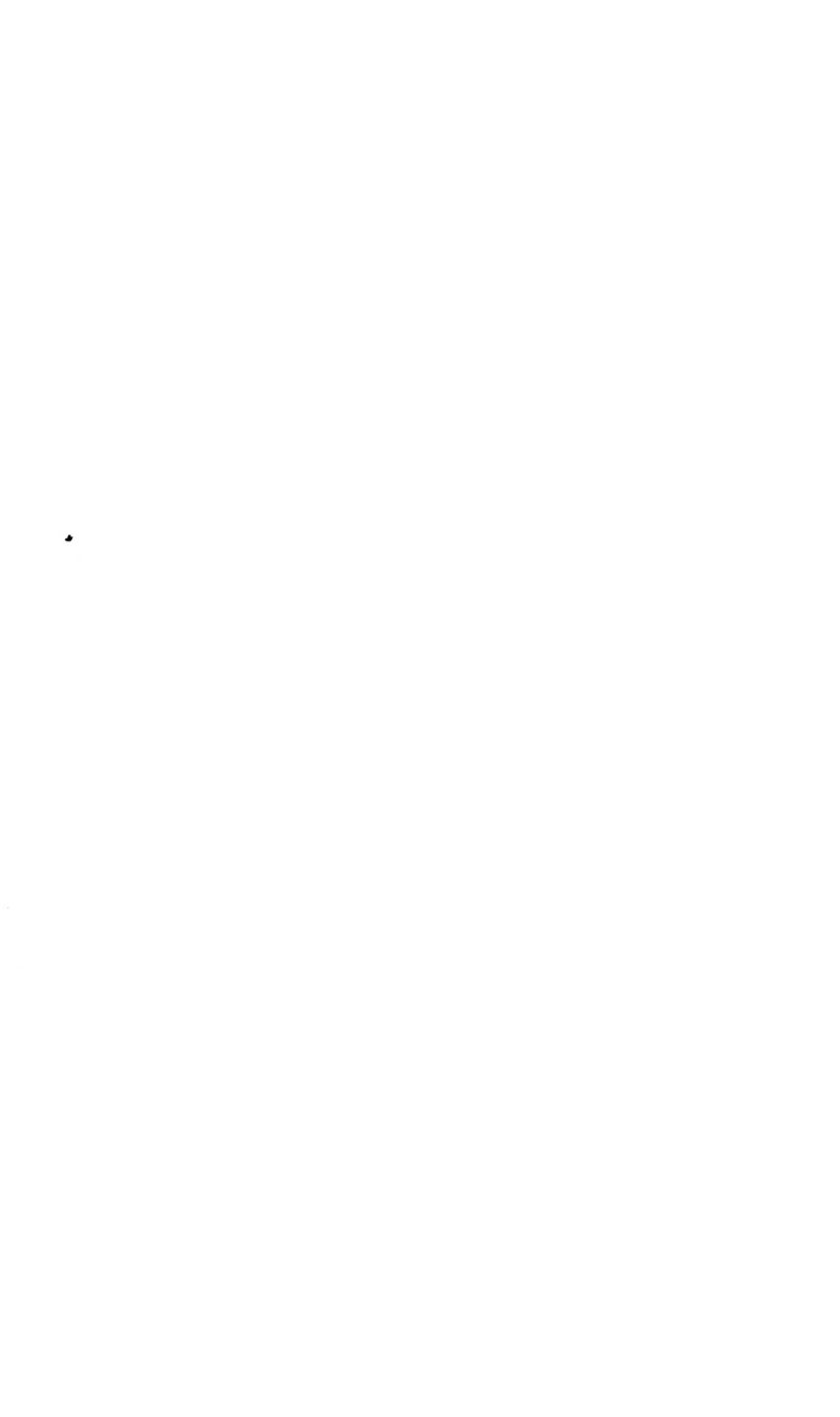
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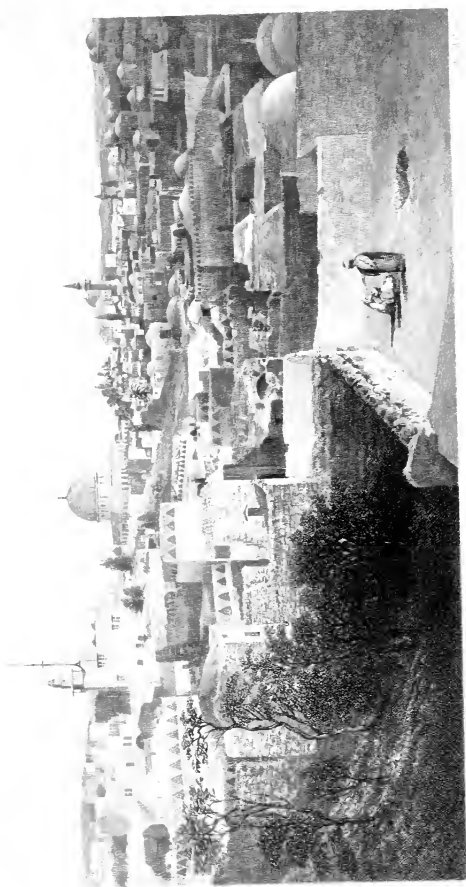












View of Constantinople from the Bosphorus

“THE TENT AND THE KHAN:”

A JOURNEY

TO

SINAI AND PALESTINE.

BY  
ROBERT WALTER STEWART, D.D.,  
LEGHORN.

WITH MAP AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

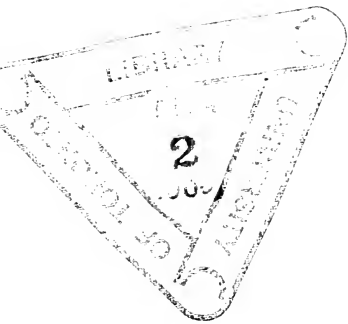
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## P R E F A C E .

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FULLY aware of the number of volumes which of late years have issued from the press on Palestine and the adjoining countries, I long declined to add another to the list. But being still urged by many kind, though I fear too partial, friends, to put into their hands the narrative of a journey undertaken solely for my own private instruction and better comprehension of the topography of Scripture, I have at last consented, in the hope of being thus enabled to minister to others a part of the benefit which I obtained by a personal inspection of localities dear to every Christian heart.

Where so much has been published, he must be a bold man who lays claim to great originality. At the same time, I am persuaded that notwithstanding all which has been written on Bible Lands, the subject is yet very far from being exhausted. The Arabian Desert, in particular, is still scarcely known beyond the beaten track which leads from Suez to the Convent of St Catherine at Ghebel Mousa, and from thence to Petra and Hebron. This arises in part from the difficulty of getting the Bedouins to deviate from the paths by which they are accustomed to travel; and partly from the short time which travellers devote to it, and the foregone conclusion with which

they enter on the journey, that there are only a few leading points, such as Sinai, Petra, etc., worthy of attention. I have stated the convictions borne home to my own mind regarding some of the disputed localities in the march of the Israelites, and I leave it to the reader to accept them or not according as they approve themselves to his judgment; reminding him once more that the journey was not undertaken to find materials in support of a previously adopted theory. I hope that the reasons assigned for placing GERAR much farther to the south than it has generally been supposed to be, may be reckoned as conclusive by others as they seem to my own mind.

Where minute measurements of such objects as pools, towers, ancient walls, etc., are given in this Volume, I have availed myself of the labours of the Rev. PROFESSOR ROBINSON of New York, as his remarkable accuracy in these matters has made him a standard authority even with those who differ from some of his conclusions. His 'Biblical Researches' is decidedly the best Guide Book which the traveller can take with him on such a journey.<sup>1</sup> Another book, which no traveller can well dispense with, is 'Dr WILSON's Lands of the Bible.' The information which it conveys concerning the Jews and the Eastern Churches is particularly valuable.

To my friend and elder, Mr ROBERTSON, and to his assistant,

<sup>1</sup> It is proper to explain that the new and enlarged Edition of Dr Robinson's valuable work, containing his late 'Researches in Palestine,' was not published till after the manuscript of this Volume was sent home for the press; and that the references, therefore, throughout the following pages are to the former Edition of 1841. Dr Bonar's 'Desert of Sinai' was published still more recently; so that the Author had not the opportunity of consulting either of these works.—ED.

SIGNOR AZZARDI, my best thanks are due for the construction of the map attached to this Volume, which will enable the reader to trace the position of the localities referred to in the Desert.

I have to acknowledge with sincere thanks the kindness of PROFESSOR GREGORY of Edinburgh, and of his assistant Dr DALZELL, in undertaking the analysis of the springs of Nichele, Pharaoh's Baths, and others, the valuable results of which appear in the following pages. My thanks are also due to my friend Mr GRAHAM of Limekilns, for several excellent photographs of scenes in the Holy Land, one of which I have selected for the Frontispiece to this Volume.

I am aware that the long list of unpronounceable *Ghebels* and *Wadis* is calculated to try the reader's patience; yet these are the only landmarks in the Desert, and without them, those who are planning a similar journey or actually engaged in it, would find the Book useless. To aid as far as possible in the pronunciation of such names, a mark of accentuation has been put above the emphatic syllable, denoting that its sound is to be prolonged, while the others are lightly passed over. The only combination of letters in the Arabic names likely to puzzle the English reader, is the Kh; it is therefore well to bear in mind that wherever they occur in union, they have the deep guttural sound given by the Greeks to the letter  $\chi$ , and that the Saxon who has attained to the correct articulation of our Scottish word *Loch* is master of their exact pronunciation.

I must claim the indulgent criticism of the reader if he should

occasionally discover repetitions in this Volume, as it has been written in such leisure hours as could be spared from ministerial duty; and my residence abroad deprives me of the advantage of revising it as it passes through the press. To my much-esteemed friend, Mr SHERIFF CLEGHORN, who has kindly undertaken to correct the proof sheets, I hereby tender my sincere thanks.

R. W. S.

LEGHORN, *December* 1856.

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# THE TENT AND THE KHAN.

## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION—PREPARATIONS FOR THE DESERT.

I EMBARKED at Leghorn on board the French mail steamer 'Bosphore,' on the evening of the 22d December 1853, and arrived at Malta on the morning of the 26th. Among my fellow-passengers were Mr William Maitland, a partner in the house of Mackillop, Stewart and Company of Calcutta, a most agreeable travelling companion and friend, from whom I parted with sincere regret at Suez; and two brothers of Captain Butler, the hero of Silistria, one a clergyman of the Church of England, the other Captain Henry Butler, of the 55th Regiment, who was killed, not a year afterwards, at Inkermann, while discharging bravely his duty as a staff-officer.

The day was spent in visiting old and kind friends on the island. To facilitate money negotiations during my journey, my friend, Mr Henderson, had procured for me, before leaving Leghorn, letters to merchants in all the towns I was likely to visit, with a single exception, and that was Jerusalem. I hoped at Malta to be able to procure a letter of credit on Jerusalem, but my efforts there were unsuccessful; and I may add as a proof of how completely she has been 'minished and brought low,' that similar efforts at Alexandria and Cairo were equally unavailing, though the merchant to whom my letter of credit was addressed in the latter city, was a Jew, and did a large business with Aleppo, Damascus, and other cities of the East. He told me that, as there were no merchants there and no traffic, it would be impossible in all Cairo to get such a letter as I wished.

In the afternoon we embarked on board the 'Louqsor,' the finest and largest French steamer I had ever been in, which went at great speed, making the voyage between Malta and Alexandria in little more than ninety hours. I landed at Alexandria on the morning of the 30th December, and on the following morning left it by the steamer for Cairo, at which we did not arrive till the evening of the 1st January 1854, after a thirty-seven hours passage, when we were glad to find ourselves in comfortable quarters at Shepherd's Hotel.

Before starting for the Desert, I resolved to see as much of Cairo and its *contorni*, as it was possible to overtake; and, in this, I found a hearty coadjutor in my friend Mr Maitland. The limits of this volume do not allow of my entering on a description of the objects of deep interest in and around Cairo, which fully occupied the fortnight of my stay. I cannot, however, omit mentioning the interesting discovery, at Sakkára, of the Serapeum, as it has not yet been mentioned by any English author that I am aware of. The honour of this discovery, made only a few months before our visit, belongs to the French gentleman who is now clearing out the sand around the Sphinx, but whose name, unfortunately, I did not ascertain. The Serapeum is most correctly described by Strabo, as being 'in a very sandy spot.' It is situated about a quarter of a mile north-west of the great pyramid of Sakkára, and is under ground. Facing the west, a broad avenue, on an inclined plane, cut out of the rock, leads down to it; at regular distances are small niches in the sides, where lamps or statues were probably placed. As far as I could judge, without a compass, the underground mausoleum consisted of two long corridors, crossing each other at right angles, in which stand thirty-six monster sarcophagi of polished red granite, in perfect preservation, with the lids still upon them. They are all empty, and have evidently been rifled, for the lids have been pushed down about a couple of feet from the top, so as to allow a man to get inside. These are the burial places of the sacred Bulls—the god Apis, whom the Egyptians worshipped, and in honour of whom the Israelites made a golden calf at Sinai. I suppose the Egyptians had the same axiom with regard to Apis, which we have with regard to the sovereign, '*Le Roi ne meurt pas,*' and that, when the old deity was ready to give up the ghost, they had a new ox ready to take his place. I could observe no hieroglyphic or other characters upon the sarcophagi. We reckoned ourselves very fortunate in getting admission, by means of a letter which Shepherd gave us, as, owing to the misbehaviour of some of our countrymen, the discoverer had been obliged to refuse general admittance



to it. For a few piastres, I bought from one of the Arabs a small bronze Ibis, much oxidized, which had been found in the Serapeum.

In the remainder of this introductory chapter, I propose to treat of *ways and means*, a subject which, from a Chancellor of the Exchequer, or a Commissary-General, downwards to the plodding pedestrian with knapsack on his back, not only forces itself on the attention, but usually becomes one of engrossing interest. As my purse is by no means of plethoric dimensions, the journey, as originally planned, was to be confined to Palestine; but, on my intention becoming known accidentally to the kind relative to whom this volume is dedicated, he, in the handsomest manner, insisted on bearing the whole expense, and suggested that the journey should be extended to Egypt and the Desert of Sinai. Though no man shrinks more sensitively than that nobleman from having his generous deeds publicly paraded, it would be doing violence to my own feelings to pass this one over unnoticed; and, it would, at the same time, be withholding an example, which many whom God has blessed with abundant means, might imitate with great advantage to themselves and the congregations to which they belong, by putting it in the power of their clergymen to complete their sacred studies by a personal examination of Bible lands.

The actual sum expended in travelling during four months and a half, from the time of leaving Leghorn till I returned there again, was £300 sterling. Owing to the unusually early period of the year when I left Cairo, no one was willing to encounter the risk of drenching rains in the desert, by joining company with me, otherwise, with a couple of companions sharing the expenses, that amount would have been considerably reduced. Putting aside £100, to meet steamboat fares and hotel bills throughout the route, which every one must pay in full for himself, this leaves £200 for the outfit at Cairo, and the entire expenses of a four month's journey, including servants, Bedouins, Mukharis, camels, horses, mules, etc. As one tent, one set of servants, one party of Bedouins, one canteen, and one backshish, serve equally for three as for one, the sum of £200, left to cover all these expenses, when equally divided, gives somewhat less than £70 as the share to be paid by each. If a man wants to travel over the ground as cheaply as possible, he should time his arrival at Cairo, so as to meet the host of travellers disembarking from the cataracts of the Nile, during the month of March; he is then pretty certain of falling in with travelling companions. But, if one has other objects in view in his journey, than merely to race through these countries, as the majority of English visitors do, apparently for no other reason than to be able to boast

afterwards that 'They have been, and gone, and done it,' it is matter for serious consideration whether he will expend a little more, and be his own master, journeying where he pleases, and halting when he comes to an object of interest; or whether, for the sake of a little economy, he will join partnership with a couple of strangers, whose tastes may not be in unison with his, and who object to draw the rein Saturday or Sunday; and thus be reduced to the disagreeable alternative of either sacrificing the object of his journey for the sake of peace, or of having 'a flare up' with his tent fellows, at an average two or three times a day.

Another preliminary to be settled before starting, and on which the traveller's mind should be made up before reaching Cairo, is whether he or the dragoman is to be master during the journey. The dragomen of Cairo are now getting into the way of contracting with parties, like the old vetturini in Italy, to provide everything for the journey from that city to Beyrout, at £3 a-head daily, if the party consists of one or two persons only, and at £1 a-head if it be composed of eight or a dozen, including, I believe, backshish to Sheikhs, and a séjour of a stipulated number of days in an hotel at Jerusalem. Such an arrangement saves all the trouble of an outfit at Cairo, and the annoyance, when the journey is ended, of chaffering, with a set of blackguards, at the port of embarkation, for its disposal, probably at a tithe of what it originally cost; but under it, the traveller is completely in the power of the dragoman from the moment the contract is signed, and, if he wishes to turn aside but a mile from the ordinary track, insuperable difficulties are at once started, and he has no resource but to submit with the best grace he can. If he wishes to join another party on some excursion, the dragoman must be consulted, and if he cannot find any valid objection on his own account, the Bedouins or mule-drivers have shoulders broad enough to bear all blame, and the refusal is laid at their door. I was several times in company with gentlemen in Palestine, who, being in this enviable state of slavery to their dragomen, were obliged to move on when they gave the word of command, and to forego visits to various places, because no stipulation to that effect had been made in the contract. To a man bent on investigation such a mode of travel is intolerable.

The old plan, of every requisite for the journey being provided by the traveller, and the dragoman being hired, as any other servant, at monthly wages, may involve a little loss, in consequence of a forced sale and glutted market, at the end of the journey; but this will be more than counterbalanced by the saving on the item of living, if the

party consists of two or three persons, and one of them specially charges himself with the commissariat department, allowing nothing to be bought but at his orders, and giving out himself the stores required for daily use. The only drawback to this mode of travelling is, that if the dragoman be a dishonest fellow, he will try, as mine did, to increase his monthly wages, by buying stores whenever opportunity offers, and pocketing a handsome profit. By adopting this plan, the traveller is master of the whole *Kijileh* (caravan), he may stay when, and go where he pleases; and as the servants' wages are paid by the month, their interests do not clash with the master's pleasure, if he turn aside for half a day to the right on one occasion, or half a day to the left on another. In my case, the whole expense of outfit and provisions at Cairo was £45. Many a time afterwards I had cause to congratulate myself upon having adopted this plan, when I saw the trouble in which others were involved, who had adopted the contract system, and I recommend it to every man who is not content to be carried like a bale of goods, through those interesting countries.

I gladly seize this opportunity of acknowledging the great obligations under which I lie to Mrs Lieder,—wife of the Rev. Mr Lieder, the laborious and estimable missionary of the Church Missionary Society, and English chaplain at Cairo,—and to her friend, Miss Daniel, who, knowing all the requisites for such a journey as I proposed, and the places where they could be obtained at a moderate rate, volunteered to provide them, and thus not only saved me the fatigue of hunting up and down the bazaars for pots, pans, tents, bedding, edibles, etc., but enabled me to devote my whole time to sight-seeing while I remained in Cairo. Those who have experienced the endless annoyance and extortion suffered by travellers in providing an outfit, from the conjoint efforts of dragomen and native merchants, will appreciate the amount of the favour thus bestowed. As Mrs Lieder generously takes this trouble sometimes for those specially recommended to her, it is not wonderful that she has incurred the enmity of dishonest dragomen whom she has baulked of what they consider 'their lawful prey.'

The first requisite is a tent, and one of twelve strings is sufficiently large to accommodate two persons comfortably; indeed, with a little management, it may serve for three. The size and the price are reckoned by the number of strings or cords in the tent, a cord being fastened between every width of canvass. For £3, 5s., I bought a good second-hand twelve string tent, gay with variegated colours of blue, red, and yellow. A small bell tent for the servants, cost about

17s. Anticipating heavy rains in the Desert, my friends had the top of mine lined with waxcloth, a precaution which ought never to be neglected by those who enter the Desert before the end of February, and but for which, I should have passed many a night drenched to the skin. One further precaution, neglected in my tent, should be attended to, and that is, either to have it completely lined on the inside, or, at least, in that part where the uprights are joined to the pavilion, otherwise, the only preservative from wind and rain is a flimsy fringe of cotton outside, without tie or fastening. A folding table, a couple of camp stools, a Turkish rug to sit or lie upon, a bit of matting for the floor, a couple of gimlets fastened into the tent pole to serve as pegs, and a wind rope for attaching outside to the top of the pole, to keep the tent from being blown over, complete the furniture got on the spot. To avoid the probability of catching rheumatism, or a fever, it is desirable that a folding-up iron camp bedstead should be brought from Europe, with a good blanket or two, and an India rubber coverlet. The thin quilt called *Leháf*, which serves for bedding by night, and a saddle by day, can best be got at Cairo.

For edibles, a man must consult his own taste, and his guide book. Preserved meats of all kinds can be had at Robertson's store. If no objection be felt to the Arab mode of baking bread,<sup>1</sup> a large sack of flour is all that is needed, and he can then have 'damper' morning and evening throughout the journey. I would recommend, however, a visit to Mr Walker's English bakery in Cairo, where excellent biscuits, sealed up in tin cases, can be procured, and also delicious apricot marmalade to eat with them, as butter is a delicacy unknown in these parts. Of course, curry powder and *mishmish* (dried apricots from Damascus) must not be forgotten. A light cane hencoop, hoisted on the top of a camel's ordinary load, carries an abundant supply of poultry, and now and then a sheep or kid can be purchased from the Arabs. As the water between Cairo and Ghebel Mousa is most nauseous, a couple of barrels of Nile water should constitute a portion of a camel's load, whatever else is sacrificed; for even after being churned in a *Zimziméh* (a leathern water bottle) all day long, till the water has acquired the colour, and pretty nearly the consistency of a decoction of bark, it is still the greatest luxury one can enjoy in the Desert. As coffee and pipes constitute the civilities of Eastern life, the traveller must provide a couple of chibouks at least, as many fignans or coffee cups, and a large supply both of coffee and tobacco. A brace of

<sup>1</sup> See page 27.

pistols, or a good Colt's revolver, is a needful precaution, even for a man of peace, when setting out on such a journey; for, though the chances are, that, if he were mad enough actually to use them, he would fall under the hand of the avenger of blood, yet the knowledge that he is possessed of weapons of defence, tends to keep both the Bedouins and the Arabs of Syria on their good behaviour. On this account, I provided myself with a brace of pistols at Cairo, but am proud to state in favour of the Bedouins, to whom I became much attached during our short intercourse, that the said weapons of war were never taken out of my portmanteau, even for demonstration, during the forty days we travelled under their guidance in the desert; and that it was only after leaving Jerusalem that we were obliged, from the lawless disposition of the people, to ride well armed. The truth is, that both the Tówerah and Tiáhah tribes are now fully aware that the stream of golden guineas (for *guinéah* has become a current Arabic word) which flows every year into the Desert for the safe, orderly, and civil transport of travellers, is a far more sure and satisfactory source of wealth, than the acquisition of one or two prizes of considerable value by violence and robbery; as this would deter travellers, and, at the same time, bring down upon them the wrath of the Pasha of Egypt. It must not be overlooked, however, that this change has been brought about in the first instance, and is still to a certain extent maintained, by the threats of severe retribution in case of the murder or robbery of a traveller, held out by their rough and unscrupulous ruler, who contrives to keep either the *Sheikh el Kebeir*—‘the Sheikh in chief’—of each tribe, or some of his near relations, in honourable but secure custody near his person as hostages for good behaviour.

As the vanity of an Egyptian dragoman is only second in degree to that of a peacock or a Greek, you are sure to be assailed by the fellow, whose good fortune it is to own you for his Howajee, with incessant applications for arms: he pretends it is necessary he should have them, that he may keep the Bedouins in order, and make himself and you respected. If there is any gentleman—vain as his swarthy interpreter—who must needs have a mountebank to grace his turn out in the Desert, as he has his *chasseur* flaunting in silver lace and cock's feathers to attract notice in Regent Street or Hyde Park, by all means let him give the order; Ali, Hamed, or whatever his name may be, will see to its execution punctually, and with profusion; but, if vanity is not your besetting sin, as the arms provided for yourself are amply sufficient for a *demonstration*, you will do wisely to let him

know, as early as possible, that you have no intention of arming your servants, and that, as for the Bedouins, you do not require his aid further than in translating your orders to them. Most of these fellows are the greatest cowards on earth; invariably the first to fly from a scene of real danger, and it is doubtful whether, if put to the proof of discharging their firearms, many of them would exhibit more courage than the one who fell to my lot. He had vainly clamoured for pistols and sword before leaving Cairo. On the day of my arrival at Nazareth, wanting to clean my pistols, which had become rusty by being carried constantly in my girdle since leaving Jerusalem, I gave them to my master of ceremonies, desiring him to fire them off at the tent door, as I had got badly lamed, and could not move without pain,—but my surprise may be imagined when he point blank refused, and the truth came out that he did not know how to handle a loaded fire-arm! Extravagant demands are also made by dragoman, servants, and Bedouins, for presents in the shape of clothing, before setting out, as things to which they have a prescriptive right. No such right exists. Acting under the advice of those who knew well both the ways of the Cairenes, and of the Bedouins, I agreed to give a shaggy Albanian capote to both of the servants, to sleep in at night, and an additional backshish in money to the Sheikh, if satisfied with him, at the end of the journey; but refused positively silken robes, or webs of cotton cloth for turbans, or anything in the shape of perquisites as of right belonging to the Sheikh. The only thing which has grown into an established custom is, that the Howajee shall supply his Bedouin escort with tobacco for smoking during the journey. As they are often reduced to the necessity of smoking the dried leaves and branches of the Retém (broom), and other shrubs in the Desert, tobacco of an inferior sort, and cheap price, is a great treat to them; it is wise policy to supply them with it, as it keeps them in good humour,—and a few okas are amply sufficient. Travellers are further imposed upon by being forced to buy a quantity of silks and cottons, boots, swords, and firearms, as presents to the Sheikhs whom they have to deal with by the way. Once this was necessary in the Desert, as I believe it still is to the east of the Jordan, but on the west of it, and in the peninsula of Arabia, an additional backshish in hard cash, is now valued more than any presents of wearing apparel.

As I was to be quite alone, it was deemed advisable that two servants should accompany me, one as dragoman or interpreter and general manager, the other as cook and tent-keeper when both the dragoman and I were absent, otherwise the temptation of a little

private pillaging would prove much too strong for the honesty and honour of the Bedouin guard. The former of these gentlemen was named Shaheen Hegási, a follower of the false prophet, and, before he left my service, a Haj, or saint of the second degree, having made three visits to the Mosque of Omar at Jerusalem, which is reckoned equivalent to one journey to Mecca. He stands about five feet four inches high; his face, of deep olive complexion, is thickly covered with traces of small-pox; and a habitual frown, and thick sulky lips, give a disagreeable expression to the whole countenance. In lieu of the flowing robes of the East, he wears the costume of his class, a light blue braided jacket, the Albanian kilt of white cotton on state occasions, and for every-day work the blue cotton petticoat trousers of the Greeks, reaching to the calf of the leg, and blue stockings; the red fez upon his head, and his feet stuck in a slovenly way into a pair of European shoes, down at the heels. He was an active bustling fellow, possessed some good qualities, spoke Italian remarkably well, and had been highly recommended to the Lieders by a lady with whom he had travelled the previous season; but, owing to several very serious faults, I could not in conscience at parting give him a *first class* certificate. A thin, melancholy looking young man, a few inches taller than Shaheen, stood beside him, when my first introduction to my future staff took place. His countenance was almost as black as a Nubian's, and a scar on his cheek showed he had once been a slave; but the features were regular, delicately chiselled, and altogether different from those of the negro race. He was clothed in a long robe of coarse black linen, resembling a priest's *soutane*, reaching from the throat to the ankles, with the fez and European shoes to complete his wardrobe. This was to be Shaheen's coadjutor, a poor Abyssinian Christian, named Hanna Antinous (John Anthony), who spoke not a word of any European language, and but a small amount of Arabic, his acquirements being chiefly confined to his beloved *Ettiopé*. As this was a great disadvantage in a cook and servant, I remonstrated against his appointment; but, in reply, it was urged that I could get him more cheaply than another possessing the language qualification; that it was an act of charity towards a Christian who was in miserable poverty; and that he was a most worthy creature. So Hanna was put on the muster-roll as No. 2. By the time we reached Jerusalem, I became convinced that my friends had not been mistaken in their estimate of him; and but for his ignorance of any European language, he should then have stood No 1, and Shaheen been sent about his business. Two faults he had, the one

that he was but an indifferent cook, the other that he was very slow in his movements; but he was a most attached creature, and wept like a child at parting, because I would not take him to Europe with me. But for the need of having some one to look after the safety of the tents, I am certain the journey would be made far more comfortably with one attendant, combining the duties of both dragoman and cook in his own person;—at all events, after having been nearly distracted by the cat-and-dog life which mine led, I feel qualified to advise, that when there are but a couple of servants in a company, care should be taken that they are not of different creeds. Poor Hanna was once or twice nearly murdered by the savage Mohammedan, on account of his being a cursed Nasrané. The monthly rate of wages to be paid to these men, respectively, was £6, or piastres 678 to Shaheen, and £3, or piastres 339 to Hanna, with board, and an additional month's wages on dismissal to pay for their return. I learned at Beyrout that both provisions and wages are more reasonable there than at Cairo.

The Bedouins usually encamp at the base of the hills to the east of Cairo, disliking the restraint of the town; and a messenger was sent thither to summon the Sheikh, under whose protection I was to make the journey through the Desert. From the magnificent descriptions which previous travellers have given of the attire and grandeur of the Sheikhs who conducted them, one is apt to expect a person of most imposing presence. It is, therefore, due to truth to say, that the romance of eastern travel is fast disappearing, and that the duty of guarding the swarms of *giâours* who invade their territory annually, is no longer discharged by the *Sheikh el Kebeir* in person, but by individuals of inferior, though respectable, rank in the tribes, who can command a certain number of followers. I had expected the great man himself, or his brother, or cousin-german at least, with red silk robe, cashmere turban, and I know not what besides; I could, therefore, scarcely believe that a practical joke had not been played upon me, when a tall, thin, wiry figure stood before me, and was introduced as the Sheikh Nassár Abu Amer of the Waled Said clan of the Tówerah Arabs. His whole apparel consisted of a filthy cotton shirt, reaching to the calf of the legs, with sleeves of equal length, cut to a point, like those of a Cambridge B.A.'s gown, and fastened by what once was a red leathern girdle round his loins—just such a one as John the Baptist wore of old—with bare feet, and head encased in a fez, colourless with age and grease, but set off by a whole web of whitest cotton, wrapped round it as a turban, and destined to be



carried thus till he reached his family in the Wadi Feiran. Though poor and dirty in outward appearance, there was a grace and dignity in his bearing, a proud erectness of the head, unmistakeably indicating the freeman born, and a truthfulness in the expression of his dark piercing eye, which prepossessed me at once in his favour, and fully justified Mrs Lieder's remark, 'Behold a son of Ishmael, one of the princes of the Desert!' It is extraordinary what an amount of influence she has acquired over these Sheikhs of the Bedouins, very much, I believe, owing to the care she takes that justice shall be done them, by advising all who consult her to pay the Sheikhs themselves, instead of allowing their wages to pass through the dragoman's hands, to which a portion is always sure to adhere in the transmission. As her friend, Nassar promised to take every care of me, and putting his hand on the top of his turban, declared that he would be answerable for my safety with his head. We then proceeded to business. It was arranged that he was to conduct me in twelve days to Ghebel Mousa, by Wadi Tawarik, and that I was to pay for seven camels—six for my own use, and one for the Sheikh (a perquisite now established by usage)—the sum of 160 piastres for each camel for the whole journey; 5 piastres more for every day we stopped for rest, except the Sabbath; and 10 piastres each, for every day they were used in travelling out of the direct course. It was further arranged, that, if he gave satisfaction on this first journey, he should afterwards conduct me either to Akabah or Nukhl, at the rate of 100 piastres more for each camel. The English sovereign was at that time worth 113 piastres, so that the sum paid to the Bedouins for transport from Cairo to the Convent at Ghebel Mousa, including a day and a half of stoppages, was about £10, 10s.; and from Ghebel Mousa to Nukhl, about £6, 5s.; and adding backshish to the Sheikh and his men at parting, the entire expense of four men and seven camels, for twenty-five days, did not amount to quite £20.

After Mr Lieder had kindly explained to Nassar the route I wished to take, and given him special charges to communicate the names of all the Wadis and mountains we should pass, we adjourned to the British Consulate to have a contract regularly drawn up between the Sheikh and myself. For a fee of 37 piastres the consul's dragoman prepared the document in Arabic; and after reading it in that language to Nassar, and to me in Italian, he handed it to me for my signature, and called the Sheikh to produce his seal. It was a small silver seal with his name engraved upon it in Arabic characters, and the Vice-Consul having put ink on it, affixed it to the document, and

lo! the contract was complete. This mode of legalizing documents, seems to have prevailed in the East from a very early period. Royal mandates and decrees became valid by the application of the king's signet, and this, in most instances, not by the king's own act, but by that of his prime minister. If my memory serves me aright, Layard has discovered such signets among his disinterred treasures at Nineveh. This practice, still in use among the sons of Ishmael, brings very vividly before the mind the significance of Pharaoh's action, when, after declaring to Joseph in the presence of all his servants, 'See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt,' he immediately 'took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand.'—Genesis xli. 41, 42. The same practice prevailed in Persia in the days of Ahasuerus, for—on the demand of Haman that the Jews should be destroyed—'the king took his ring from his hand and gave it to Haman,' and 'in the name of King Ahasuerus was the command written and sealed with the king's ring.'—Esther iii. 10–12. When Haman was hanged, and Mordecai became prime minister, the royal signet was employed by him in like manner to revoke the former edict. King Ahasuerus said, 'Write ye also for the Jews, as it liketh you, in the king's name, and seal it with the king's ring, for the writing which is written in the king's name, and sealed with the king's ring, may no man reverse.'—Esther viii. 8.

While speaking of contracts with the Bedouin Sheikhs, there is another point, the ignorance or neglect of which has brought trouble upon many travellers, and landed some in real peril. Every Sheikh you have to deal with is ready, for the sake of your piastres, to enter into a contract to carry you, with his men and camels, all over the Desert—the territory of tribes in actual hostility with him excepted—though he knows full well that he has not the power of doing so, without perilling both your life and his own. When he comes into the territory of another tribe his right to monopolize all the *guinéahs*, and to sweep through their country without leaving any benefit behind, is contested; the party under his charge are held prisoners in some Wadi surrounded by armed and infuriated Bedouins, while a wordy war rages for a day, sometimes more, and the matter usually ends in their being victimised. The first Sheikh is allowed to fulfil his contract on condition of their handing over a sum to the opposing Sheikh, as a solatium, or right of way, or *black mail*, if they choose to regard it in that light, besides paying for an escort of his men. But travellers are not always let off so; cases have occurred in which they have been left with all their chattels in the midst of the Desert, in the power of

the tribe whose territory they have unwittingly taken by assault, and have only been able to proceed on their journey by submitting to the most extortionate demands. It should therefore be borne in mind that the Sheikhs of the Tówerah have the power to conduct parties safely through all the lower peninsula of Sinai, and as far as Akabah on the east, or Nukhl in the centre of the Desert, or Gaza, if they travel well to the westward, but no farther. The Sheikhs of Akabah and of the Tiáhah will not permit them to conduct travellers across their territory, and any contract made with them to such effect will only entail inconvenience and extra expense. The Sheikhs of Akabah and of the Tiáhah have the power of conducting parties from Akabah, or Nukhl, to the borders of Palestine, but the Fellahin of Petra dispute the right of either to show the way into their rocky penetralia; and faction fights arise almost every year from their attempts to do so. In entering into contracts with these Sheikhs, therefore, it ought to be carefully stipulated that the party are either to be conducted into Petra by the Sheikh of the Fellahin, or that a certain sum of money out of the contract is to be paid by *them* into the said Sheikh's hands, as the price for which the stranger tribe is permitted to do so.

Circumstances to be afterwards mentioned compelled me, when at Nukhl, to abandon the journey to Petra. I therefore entered into a new contract, drawn up with all formality by the Governor's Secretary, with Menhazen, a Sheikh of the Tiáhah tribe, whereby he engaged to take me to Khalil (Hebron) in seven days, resting the Sabbath; and I promised to pay for seven camels 120 piastres each for the whole journey, and 70 piastres additional as the portion of the Sheikh el Kebeir, amounting in all to about £8 of our money. The usual sum paid for the journey from Nukhl to Gaza is 100 piastres for each camel. A clause was added to the contract drawn up at the British Consulate at Cairo, whereby Nassar bound himself to remain three days at Nukhl with me, at his own expense; and in case the Tiáhah would not supply camels, to conduct me to Gaza on the terms just mentioned.

I have already mentioned the impossibility of getting a letter of credit or money order on Jerusalem, at Leghorn, Malta, Alexandria, or Cairo; it was therefore necessary to take with me a sum calculated to carry me to Beyrout, constituting a much larger quantity of gold and silver than was prudent. I had an opportunity of pointing out this inconvenience afterward to Mr Melville Bergheim, who had lately established a banking house at Jerusalem, and of urging him to form business connections both in Alexandria and Beyrout for the con-

venience of persons who might come, as I had done, without a London banker's letter of credit.

Before leaving Cairo for the Desert it is necessary to have the passport viséed by the Egyptian Police, otherwise the traveller incurs the certainty of being sent back from Ghebel Mousa. If he wishes to enter the convent of St Catherine, he must pay a dollar, and provide himself with an order from the Greek Convent in Cairo, otherwise it is said he will be excluded without mercy, a fact which I take leave to doubt from what came under my own observation there. However, the letter of recommendation is always asked for, before the rope is lowered to swing up the stranger.

Travelling in Syria is much after the same fashion as in the Desert, only that camels are there exchanged for mules or horses. There is a rascal at Jerusalem called the Sheikh el Mukhari, who has control over all the animals for hire in the city, and can impose what price he likes on travellers. As I was among the first strangers who had arrived from the south, and as a long interval elapsed before any more made their appearance, the Sheikh became afraid that it might be a bad season, and I got two riding horses and three mules at the rate of 13 piastres each per day. When I left, the price had risen to 20 piastres per diem for each mule or horse, and it was with difficulty that I could keep my mukhari to his bargain. He made up for it, however, at the moment of starting for Beyrout, by refusing to set out unless I took a sixth mule, a piece of extortion to which I was obliged to submit, as my fellow travellers were then actually in the saddle. With the mukhari or mule driver, who accompanies you on a tour through Syria, it is necessary to have a contract drawn and signed by the dragoman of the British Consulate at Jerusalem. The agreement between Mohammed and myself was, that at the rate specified above, I was to pay him for eleven days journey, and four for returning, if we went to Beyrout only; or for ten days journey, and five for returning, if we went to Damascus only; but that, if, on arrival at one of these places, I re-engaged his animals to take me forward to the other, then there was to be nothing paid in the shape of return money. The sum payable in any one of these three cases is about L9 sterling. However cumbersome, while travelling in the Desert, an English saddle and bridle may be, they are indispensable in Syria. The native bridle is usually nothing more than a hair rope, and the saddle the most purgatorial of all human inventions—so broad that a man seated on it tries in vain to gird his horse with his legs—and with great shovel stirrups, so short, and set so far back, that he looks for all the

world when in motion, as if he were attempting to perform 'curcuddie'<sup>1</sup> on horseback. A good saddle and bridle, and a revolver pistol, are about the only things now connected with a gentleman's Eastern outfit, which he is sure to dispose of at the end of his journey without an alarming sacrifice.

This chapter on the preparations for travel would scarcely be complete without some notice of the 'Ship of the Desert,' as the camel is not inappropriately called. While acknowledging with admiration that Wisdom which adapted the conformation of the camel to the sterile parched regions in which it lives, I have never been able to see in it the meekness and amiability of disposition which have excited the sympathies and praises of some travellers. A greater 'shirk' is not to be found among the beasts of burden. From the moment it is made to kneel to be loaded, until the operation is over, it roars as frantically as if it were being murdered, and snaps viciously at every one who comes within its reach; and so determined is its obstinacy, that if the load is greater than it likes, every effort to make it rise is vain until it has been lightened. It may, for aught I know, take long before its blood is thoroughly roused, but when it is, it knows both how to defend itself and to take revenge. Years ago I remember giving one a poke in the flank with an umbrella in the crowded bazaar of Smyrna as he was about to crush me with his load, when, with the rapidity of lightning, he struck out with his hind leg and laid an unoffending and unconscious water-carrier low in the dust. The man's look of deep bewilderment at so treacherous and unprovoked an attack was worth a million.

It is not with moral qualities, however, but with such practical matters as how to mount, and how to ride it, that we have now to do. To gentlemen and ladies who have never left Europe, this steed-mounting suggests nothing more difficult than putting a foot in the stirrup, and bounding with one spring into the saddle. But, with the camel, *pour toute monture*, it is a veritable 'work of labour and of skill' to get into your perch, and, once there, to make good your tenure of it, until the ungainly animal has brought his long legs to the perpendicular. Let not a novice, strong in the might of his skilful European equestrianism, despise the hints and signs of the camel driver, otherwise the probability is, that he will be carried back to his hotel with broken limbs or collar bone, when he expected, to use a phrase ex-

<sup>1</sup> A game in Scotland, in which the performer, crouching down, sits on his toes, and in that attitude begins to spring forward with all the agility of which he is capable.

cessively in vogue with English tourists in Egypt and Syria, to be '*going it jollily*' in the Desert. The difficulty of mounting arises from two causes, an artificial and a natural. The artificial one is this, that, instead of a saddle, there is placed upon the hump a wooden frame, resembling exactly in shape, though on a most diminutive scale, the arched roof of a house, with a knobbed chimney rising high at either end. As it is impossible for a human being to make a journey through the Desert scathless, on such a machine, the first preparation for your mount is laying the thin mattress and quilt, which form your bedding, lengthwise across this wooden saddle-frame. The camel is down, his driver stands upon his doubled up shin to prevent his rising, and up you come boldly to his side to mount; but you perceive at a glance that, with the saddle four feet above the ground, and with your bedding projecting a foot and a half at least on either flank, a spring and a hop will do you no good; one leg becomes immoveably fixed on the pile of bedding at right angles with the other, and there you stick till your attendants thrust you on as best they can. I am persuaded, though I never tried it personally, that if one wants to get on a camel in a neat, handy fashion, there is nothing for it but a '*once, twice, thrice, and away.*' and a running leap! Failing this, the next best plan, if the animal will allow you to approach without biting, is to step on its neck, and then clamber up the hump in front to your eye. This is the Arab mode of mounting. The natural difficulty is even greater than the artificial at first, though soon got over by experience. When down to receive its load, the camel's legs, both hind and fore, are doubled up under him, much in the fashion of a carpenter's rule; but I know no mechanical movement which can exactly describe the animal's rise to its eight or ten feet elevation. It consists in a series of springs, like those which a man makes when he tries the gymnastic game of rising from a sitting posture, without putting his hands to the ground. By the first spring it rises upon its fore knees, and, unless you hold vigorously by the saddle knob in front, you run all the risk of being spitted on the back one, somewhat after the fashion of a scarabæus or a butterfly on an entomologist's card. The second spring is more violent, as by it the animal gets up at once on its hind legs, and it is only by a strong pull at the back knob that you are saved from being pitched right over its head. There is one spring more to regain his perfect height, and, if you keep your seat till then, you are in a position to look into the first floor windows in the streets of Cairo. The same process, only in reverse, is repeated every time you dismount; but I soon became weary of this, and, making the

camel come to a halt, always descended by laying myself on the bedding projecting over the animal's side, and then sliding down. As I have known many cases in which persons have broken a limb, or sustained serious internal injury, by falls from camels in mounting or dismounting, these hints on the mode of equitation are not altogether unnecessary or out of place.



## CHAPTER II.

## CAIRO TO SUEZ.

It was our intention to have left Cairo on the afternoon of the 12th of January, but, by the time the Sheikh's contract had been signed, money matters arranged, and the passport returned from the citadel, the day was so far advanced, that it was deemed advisable to defer setting out till next morning, and Nassár was ordered to have his camels in readiness by seven o'clock. Finding he had time to make the round by Wadi Tawarik, before the arrival of the English mail at Suez, Maitland kindly agreed to be my companion through the Egyptian Desert, and had made arrangements with the Transit Company to provide camels for himself and luggage by this route, instead of being jolted in their vans along the ordinary road.<sup>1</sup> We spent our last evening at Shepherd's in company with the Butlers, who also were to start next morning on a voyage to the Cataracts. Our esteem for them ripened with the length of our acquaintance, and I regretted not being able to accompany them up the river, as they proposed, on their return, following the route I was about to take. Related by marriage to the Rev. Charles Forster, who professes, in his 'Voice of Israel from the Rocks of Sinai,' to have discovered a key to the Himyaritic inscriptions of the Wadi Mokatteb. Captain Butler had adopted, very naturally, the views of his relative, and was resolved to search the Desert for an inscription of twenty lines, in the Sinaitic character, mentioned in that work as having been seen by an Arab merchant, named Cosmas Indicopleustes, in one of his journeys, up-

<sup>1</sup> These modern 'chariots of Egypt' are strange contrivances. They seemed to me a cross between a bathing machine and one of Fortnum and Mason's ambulating tea-caddies; the body white, the wheels of a fiery vermilion, and the interior suggestive of a small cellular police van; but, if the reader desires an amusing and graphic description of 'the horrors of this middle passage,' I refer him to Dr Aiton's van pilgrimage from Cairo to Suez, in his 'Lands of the Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope.'



wards of 1300 years ago, but never stumbled upon by any one since. He intended visiting the neighbourhood of Túr, as it is known that some of these inscriptions are to be found on the rocks of Ghebel Hummam, not far from that town. I presume he was unsuccessful in his search, otherwise such a discovery must have become known by this time. We parted, in the hope of meeting again in Syria; but, at the moment of embarking at Beyrout, I learned that he had received a summons, after returning to Egypt from the Desert, to rejoin his regiment, then on its way to Gallipoli or Varna, and had been obliged to renounce the Syrian portion of his tour.<sup>1</sup>

*13th January.*—It had been arranged that we were to breakfast with the Lieders, and start from their house at eight o'clock. Two long hours, however, were lost in loading, squabbling, and general vociferation, with a description of which it is unnecessary to weary the reader. At length, bidding our kind friends adieu, we got to our saddles about ten o'clock. Our way led through the Copt Quarter; and, in many instances, curiosity prevailed over the time-honoured custom of muffling; for, at the noise caused by our Kaflehs in passing, many an unveiled female face peered eagerly out of the window. The nearest way out of the city would have been through the square of the Usbekíyeh and the Boulak Gate; but, as the gate which separates the Coptic Quarter from Usbekíyeh is very low, the loaded camels could not pass under it, and we were therefore obliged to make a long detour to find an egress. The next shortest way, was along the Bazaar, through the Bab Zoráyleh, and the Roomaíleh Square, below the Citadel, and I urged that this should be taken, but various excuses were made, and we soon found out that the route we followed had been chosen for Sheikh Nassár's convenience, as he had not loaded his barley and beans, as desired before coming in, but had trusted to doing so on issuing from the city. We left the city by the Bab el Hádid, which lies to the NW. of Cairo, while our direction lay nearly south, so that we were obliged to make almost the entire circuit of the walls to the eastward, in order to get into the path which leads to Besatín. A long delay occurred outside the gate, while the Bedouins strapped on to each camel the provender which was to last it till we reached Suez. The seventh camel, for which I paid, was not forthcoming; and, on

<sup>1</sup> I have already mentioned that Captain Butler was killed at the battle of Inkermann, too early, alas! for his country's sake; for, had he been spared, I doubt not, from his varied knowledge and habits of observation, as well as from his remarkable zeal for the military profession, he would have earned for himself both rank and reputation in the late war.

inquiring for it, Nassár assured us that one of his men had gone for it, and that it would overtake us, where we encamped for the night. At last we got in motion, and passing in succession the Bab el Footah, Bab e Nusr, and the tombs of the Caliphs, moved in procession slow and solemn as that of a funeral, through the great burial ground of Cairo, between the eastern wall and Ghebel Mokattem, where many of the inhabitants had come out to pray, or to converse together, seated at the tombs of their relations, this being Friday, their Sabbath. They generally bring out a basket of provisions with them, and make a pic-nic among the tombs—peculiar certainly! as there are no beautiful dark cypresses and cooling shades, to relieve the glare of the Desert; but there is no accounting either for tastes or fashions, and *that* is the fashion at Cairo. I suppose that, by thus feasting on the outside of the grave of a deceased member of the family, they keep up, as far as possible, the honoured practice of their forefathers, who used to set down the poor shrivelled mummy in his own old arm chair at the family meal. There must, however, have been some ‘statute of limitations’ on this point; otherwise, the mummies of a family, after a century or so, might easily have engrossed the whole table, to the exclusion of the living. Possibly an arrangement was come to, such as that still in force at St Peter’s in Rome, where the body of one Pope is kept above ground, until his successor dies, when he is carried down into the vaults, and resigns to his successors the honours of his niche in the wall, as he had already resigned to him the Fisherman’s ring, the Apostle’s chair, and the triple crown!

A heavy wind was blowing, which carried the particles of sand and gravel into our eyes, so as almost to blind us. It was far from a pleasant commencement of the journey, and awakened apprehensions lest there might be frequent repetitions of such blasts in the desert. I had never thought of this, and had forgotten to take either spectacles or goggles with me, and now, while working our way through a narrow defile, between the Mokattem range and the Citadel, I began to debate seriously whether I should not still turn back into the city, and provide myself with something of the sort for the protection of my eyes. Our Arabs, however, assured me that, once in the Desert, we should suffer from no such inconvenience, and so far as the blasts of sand are concerned they were right, but I would recommend every one setting out on this journey to take a pair of crape goggles with him, as they will often prove a great relief from the glare of the sun. We had now, at last, got into our proper route,—moving southward between the Nile and the range of Mokattem, which runs parallel with

it, but our Sheikh, who remained behind at Bab el Hádíd, had not joined us again, and on making some noise about it, the truth gradually leaked out, that he had not finished all his purchases the previous night, after I paid him the hire to Siuai in advance, and he made us take the circuit of the city to give him time to complete them, having privately agreed with the dragoman that we should sleep at Besatín, only four miles out of Cairo. The reason ostensibly held out was the one already mentioned, about the lowness of the gates which separate the various quarters in the interior of the city, and another, yet more ingenious, viz., that the camels, being 'country cousins,' not accustomed to town life, were afraid to walk through the streets of Cairo! though we actually traversed half of the city to get to the gate by which we finally issued! After this, we moved on rather sulkily. Had they been honest, and told us at once that they had not completed all their arrangements,—and that they therefore proposed to halt for the first night at Besatín, we should have sent forward the tents and luggage, and after spending another day in Cairo, have ridden out on donkeys to our quarters in the evening.

We soon passed the tombs of the Mamelukes, which are nearly in as delapidated a state, to outward appearance, as those of the Calíphs to the north of the City, and jogged along at the miserable rate of two miles and a half an hour, which is the ordinary speed of camel travelling—though a little more can be got out of young camels trained for riding, called Dromedaries. About an hour after leaving the Citadel, we passed through the burying ground of the country Arabs, who bring their dead from great distances to be interred there; as far, I was assured, as from Gizeh and Sakkara, on the other side of the river. The little village of Besatín lay before us, with bright green fields and clumps of palm trees on one side of it, and the brown sterile wilderness on the other, separated by a line as regular as that which at home divides a well gravelled avenue from the green lawn that bounds it. Like every other Egyptian village, it is mud built, and surrounded by a mound of filth, which has risen by the deposits of successive generations, till its outer edges are nearly as high as the houses. Before arriving at it, we sent on the baggage animals, and made a detour to the east, nearer the base of the Mokattem hills, to visit the burying-ground of the Jews residing in Cairo,—and traditionally believed by them to have been the last resting place of their forefathers who died during their captivity in the land of Egypt. Supposing this tradition worthy of credit, it is clear that but a very small proportion of the inhabitants of the land of Goshen could have

been brought such a distance for burial, but I doubt much whether its existence as a burial ground, can claim an earlier date than the cities of Babylon and Misr el Ateékeh, in its neighbourhood. Like the Cairene and Arab cemeteries, through which we had already passed, it was wholly unenclosed,—the graves seemed to be dug at random, without the least attention to order or regularity, and were scattered over a portion of the Desert, about half a mile square, in the midst of which stood a miserable hut, probably a *yishrioth* or chapel, where the funeral service is conducted. A number of slabs lay embedded in the gravel soil, some bearing Hebrew inscriptions, but the greater number unlettered and unadorned. Some of the graves, most lately tenanted, had been evidently disturbed by the jackals, and presented a revolting spectacle. The Jewish cemetery at Constantinople is, in like manner, unenclosed, and hence I might have been apt to conclude that the Mohammedans prohibited their paying any attention to their burying places, had I not observed the same utter carelessness, and want of decent regard for the dust of their departed friends, in the cemetery of the Jews at Corfu, where, certainly, no obstacle would have been thrown in the way of its enclosure, had they desired it.

From this burying ground, half an hour's ride brought us to the village of Besatín. We found dragoon and Arabs all busy pitching the tents, and as the mode of putting up a Desert dwelling was quite as strange to us as our situation was novel, we felt considerable excitement in watching their operations. The 'Howajee's' tent, though a small one, presented a very respectable and gay appearance from without, owing to its blue cotton walls being set off with patches of crimson and saffron, worked on them in different patterns,—while inside, it seemed a perfect snuggerly, with its little folding-up table, and couple of camp stools, the little iron camp bed, a bit of matting to keep the feet off the sand, and a gimlet or two fastened into the pole of the tent, as 'nails in a sure place,' to hang up books, bags, flasks, or any other articles, that could be stowed away by suspension. Within a few yards of it, the bell tent of the servants was erected, and all the baggage gathered into it, forming a barricade at all points but the doorway; a wise arrangement, as the canvass did not reach the ground by a couple of feet, and this barricade served as a protection, both from the cold winds, and from the wolves and jackals which often prowled about us at night. On this, our first bivouac, the servant's tent was the chief object of curiosity, as Hanna planted a small desert grate near the doorway, kindled a charcoal fire in it, and set about preparing our evening meal.

Having satisfied our curiosity with regard to the mode of tent building, and seen the establishment of the '*cucina al fresco*,' we set out to visit the village and its environs until dinner was ready. There is nothing, however, striking or novel about it. It is simply a stereotyped edition of what we had seen daily since leaving Alexandria; not a fragment of antiquity is to be seen in its neighbourhood, and if ever a town stood here, it must be buried under the dung heap on which Besatin is perched, and must have been as inconsiderable as the modern village itself. Remnants of broken pottery are generally found where an ancient city has stood, though the stones may have been carried off for building purposes elsewhere, but no such indications of the past could we find around Besatin, though we searched carefully for them. I have been particular in noting the state of this village, because some take it to be the modern representative of Rameses, the rendezvous for the Israelites, and the starting point of their journey. We shall have occasion to revert to this hereafter, and all that is necessary to be remarked at present is, that if this really be the site of Rameses, it must have been nothing more than a fortress of small extent, perhaps one of a chain uniting Memphis with Heliopolis. In referring to the reasons assigned by the Abbé Sicard, for his belief that the Israelites set out from Egypt by the route we are now following, and among others, that certain localities in the neighbourhood still bear the name of Moses, Dr Wilson mentions that 'at the place his party heard of no traditions pertaining to the venerable name of Moses.' In this we have a proof of how difficult it is to depend upon information supplied by the natives, for both my dragoman and Bedouins asserted, very positively, that there is a place near Tourah called *Mera vul Mousa*, 'the Habitation of Moses;' and added, moreover, that it was held sacred by the Mohammedans, and that, during the feast of Ramadan, the Dervishes are in the habit of going there on a particular day from Cairo, and that they pass the greater portion of the night lying naked on the ground, because they have a tradition that Moses did so. Can this tradition have taken its rise from that being the place where Moses fell on his face before the Lord, when his brethren accused Aaron and himself of being instrumental in making their slavery more bitter, by exciting against them the wrath of Pharaoh? This may not be impossible if, as some suppose, the Israelites were then labouring in the brickfields and quarries opposite Memphis.

When dinner at last appeared it was but a sorry display of the culinary art, but a cup of coffee and a chibouk of delicious Latakia tobacco, made up for all deficiencies. While writing out our journals,

the Sheikh of the village made his appearance, to say that he was responsible to government for our safety, and that we must pay for two men to keep guard around our tents during the night. We replied, that we were perfectly able to protect ourselves, if he would only keep a look out on his own villagers; that there were no Bedouins near, and no danger to be apprehended from Cairo, and that if anything happened we should hold him responsible. To an Englishman accustomed to transact business rapidly, nothing is so annoying as the Arab mode of spending hours chattering over every bargain and agreement. Long after we supposed the Sheikh consigned to his rug and his dreams, Shaheen made his appearance to say that he insisted on sending watchmen, and that the Arabs would not keep guard as they did not yet consider themselves in the Desert; in short, an hour later, the watchmen made their appearance, and sitting down by the Bedouin watch-fire, kept up a constant round either of song or conversation nearly all night long, to our excessive annoyance, as it was impossible to sleep with such a disturbance going on at our ears. Notwithstanding, however, all this watchfulness on the part of our guards an assault was made on our tent during the night by inhabitants of Besatin, for which, unfortunately, we could not make the Sheikh responsible. Our assailants were—let not my readers be shocked by a too blunt revelation of the truth—the *lice* of Egypt! Oh what a night of horror we passed. The flea is a gentleman in his mode of assault, as compared with these dreadful vermin; he skips and hops about like a flying fish, inflicts a bite and is off; but the others, as they run along your limbs, leave a cold trail behind like some loathsome serpent, which makes you shudder in the midst of sleep, and soon awakens you. Of course further rest was out of the question; to strike a light and make an examination was the work of a moment; the enemy had taken possession, so we resolved to retreat, and resuming hastily the garments we had cast aside on retiring to bed, waited as patiently as might be for the dawn. Once before I met with a similar mishap in Greece, and suffered exceedingly from feverish irritation produced by the bites, but who could have expected such an assault in the Desert? When the grey light began to appear we roused up in turn our Bedouins, who, exhausted with their songs, had rolled themselves up in their bernouses and fallen asleep. The hunt which we instituted after our disturbers would have been an amusing scene to an onlooker; the matter was much too serious to be left to the careless hands of hirelings, so we took sheets, blankets, etc, under our own special inspection! The Bedouins, who are accustomed to bear our enemies about

with them as part of their goods and chattels, could not understand the whiteskins making such a fuss about them. Various were the conjectures whence they could have come. We were disposed to blame the saddle bags of our Arabs, in which some of our bedding had been stowed away, but soon the mystery was solved—our people had foolishly encamped too near the village, within the region over which its vermin spread, and hence the annoyance from which we suffered.

14th *January*.—We had a repetition of the disputing, gesticulating, and swearing of the previous day, and I began to fear it was to be the daily routine. Shaheen assured me of the contrary, and declared that the day after leaving Cairo is considered the proper start; that these disputes arose from each man desiring to have as light a load as possible for his own camel, but that after a fair division of baggage had once been made, each would keep to his own load, and there would be no bickerings for the future. Sheikh Nassar only made his appearance from Cairo about eight o'clock, without the camel, which he said he had been obliged to leave behind from illness, but which was to be sent forward to join us at Suez. This had all the appearance of a falsehood, but there was no use making a work about it, as no redress could be had without returning to Cairo. After consultation, we resolved, as the days were short, to save time by breakfasting before starting, and to take biscuits and cheese in our saddle bags for lunch, so as to continue our route without halting till sundown. We got in motion at nine o'clock, taking a SE. direction across the plain towards the entrance of Wadi Besatin, and in a quarter of an hour came suddenly upon a body of the Pasha's soldiers, now in barracks at the village of Atar a Nabi on the Nile, who were out for a review. There were infantry, cavalry, and artillery, to the number probably of 3000 men, and we halted for a short time to watch their manœuvres, which seemed well executed. As we entered the Wadi, we had the range of Mokattem to the left, and that of Ghebel Tourah, with its ancient quarries, to the right; but as the general direction of both these ranges is N. and S., I was not prepared to find both turning at this point due East, and forming, as they do, the natural boundaries of the valley. Its breadth, judging by the eye, must have been half a mile near its entrance. The route seems much frequented, as there were six or eight camel tracks in the Wadi. Shaheen informed me that all the water required for the stations on the Transit route was brought on camels from the Nile along this road, and also that a coal mine had been discovered not long since in the neighbourhood of Suez, the mineral from which was brought also along the Derb el Besatin to

Cairo. That coal had been carried along this route, is beyond a doubt, for we passed numerous fragments of it lying scattered along our path—but whether the dragoman was correct in asserting the existence of a coal mine in the vicinity of Suez, I never was able to ascertain. He was very positive about the correctness of his statement, having lived many years at Suez as dragoman to a British Vice-Consul there, now deceased; and that the thing is not altogether improbable I judge from the intelligence received in Cairo, that Hassan Effendi, formerly a teacher of geology in the seminary at Boulak, was then employed by the Pasha in exploring for coal mines among the mountains and wadis of the Arabian peninsula.

At 12.50 we passed Ghebel Touahain, or the ‘Mountain of Millstones,’ so named from a quarry of hard stone in it from whence they are cut, and conveyed to Cairo. About the same time the Arabs pointed out at some distance on the left a hill of a reddish colour, near which they alleged there is a well called *Bir el Mousa*, and it is said that on it Moses stood while the Israelitish host passed before him, though for this tradition I am indebted to information received in Cairo, and not to my escort, who vouched only for the well bearing the Hebrew Legislator’s name. Hitherto we could see, on looking back, the valley of the Nile and the Pyramids of Gizeh, but at one o’clock a sudden turn to the north shut them out from view, near the spot where the Wadi el Agaba runs into the Derb el Besatin from the right. Shortly after, on either side of the wadi, we passed a stratum of argillaceous rock, forming a matrix for immense quantities of fossil bivalves, the most abundant of which was the *Ostrea Diluviana*, and later in the day, we saw many fine specimens of petrified trees lying embedded in the gravel, besides broken fragments in abundance. There was little or no vegetation in the lower part of this Wadi; a solitary plant of the *Dhotura* was seen at intervals growing under the shade of some projecting rock; but the only shrub we observed was a dwarf one, with leaves as small as those of thyme, having a very strong aromatic scent, which reminded me both of thyme and southernwood. This shrub the Arabs called *Rhabol*; it is much liked by the camels. At 2.40 we passed another wadi to the south, called *Abou Awasis*, and after crossing Wadi Sheráf we pitched our tents shortly after three o’clock, in a thicket of dwarf prickly shrubs, where the camels can cater for their own provender. We were rather provoked at so short a day’s journey, as we might have reached this point easily the previous night had our Sheikh dealt faithfully by us. The excuse for not proceeding farther now was, that there is no other place near,



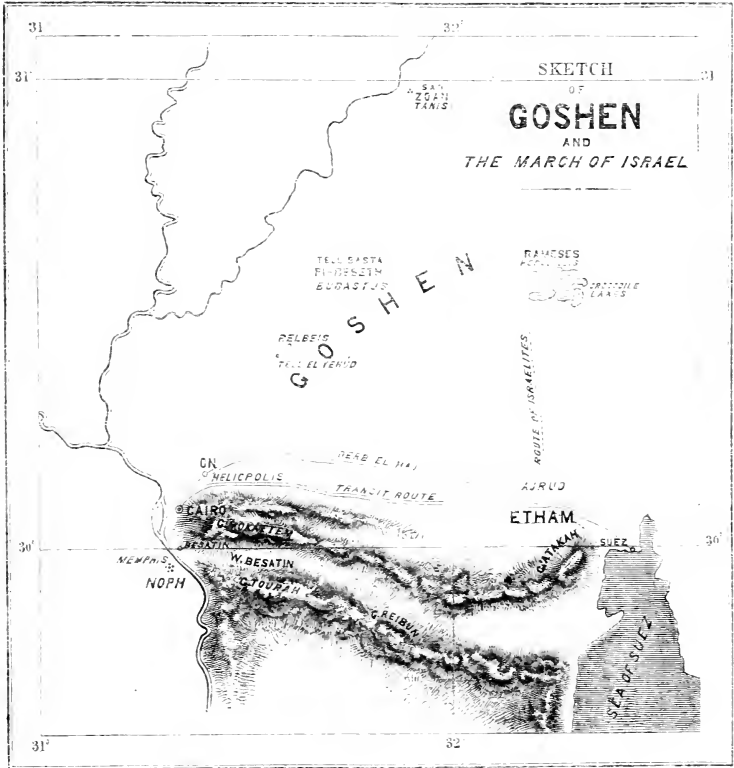
where shrubs can be found for the camels to browse on, and this is always a consideration with the Bedouin in choosing his camping ground, for he saves a ration of beans every time he can billet his camels on the Desert. A still more serious annoyance arising out of the loss of so large a portion of two travelling days was that we were compelled to travel the next day, though the Sabbath, otherwise Maitland might not have arrived at Suez till after the Indian steamer had left, owing to the uncertainty of the arrival of the mail from England.

This afternoon we had an opportunity of witnessing the whole process of unloading, unpacking, and tent-pitching; and it is certainly marvellous with what rapidity the barren desert assumes the appearance of home comfort, in the immediate circle of the little encampment. In a quarter of an hour from the time you alight, your habitation is complete, the beds are made ready, and the cooking operations set on foot. The camels, meanwhile, are allowed to wander where they please, and to make the best use of their time. As night closed in, it became excessively cold, and we were very keenly alive to the difference in temperature between our present exposed situation, and the valley of the Nile which we had just left; so, following the example of the Arabs, we set to work, hewed down the bushes around us, and soon were sitting before a blazing fire at the tent door. Meanwhile, we watched the Arabs baking bread for their evening meal, around their own camp fire. They reduce the wood as rapidly as possible to embers, then they add a large quantity of camels' dung, which, when completely ignited, throws out a very strong heat. During the time the fire is being brought to a proper state, they make flour by bruising wheat or Indian corn between two stones, then mixing it with water, form it into dough in small wooden troughs or bowls, which they always carry along with them. Each wears round his shoulders a sheepskin, which serves the double purpose of a cloak and a baking board; this is spread fleece downwards on the ground, and the dough is kneaded upon it into the form of a large round cake, or what in Scotland is called a *bannock*; the glowing embers are then swept back from their place, the cake is laid on the well-heated ground, and completely covered over by the ashes which have been temporarily removed. The cake is allowed to remain about ten minutes in this primitive oven, and it is then pulled out, fully baked, and ready for use—a smart tap or two with a stick, on either side, removing any dust which may adhere to it. They brought one of their cakes, begging us to taste it, which we did, and found it excellent. I was much interested in this scene, not only from the insight it afforded into the

customs of the Bedouins of the Desert, but also from a strong conviction that we witnessed the very mode in which, thousands of years before, the Israelites had baked their bread in this very desert, while the stock of flour or corn they brought with them out of Egypt lasted; or rather, the manner in which they had been accustomed to bake their bread while still in slavery in 'the house of bondage.' Is it not more than probable that these little wooden bowls now in use, are just 'the kneading-troughs' we read of, as being carried by the Israelites on their shoulders, in *Exod. xii. 34*: 'The people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.' And, in the Desert at least, what other mode could they have of preparing it, than that now practised by its hardy sons? This baking operation is performed twice a-day—in the morning, before they start, and at night, when the day's journey is over; and no other food do they eat, from the beginning to the end of the year, except when, on some great occasion, they resolve to slaughter a sheep or a young camel. When they have been too tired and sleepy to bake in the morning before setting out, I have seen them send forward one of their number with the necessary apparatus—who, from the great speed with which they walk, was soon out of sight—and an hour afterwards, when we came up to him, the bread was baked, or, if not quite ready, we passed on without stopping, and he soon overtook us with the morning rations for the whole party. The camels felt the difference of temperature as sensibly as we did, and soon came back of their own accord towards the fire, of which they are remarkably fond. They were then formed in a circle round it, and lay down outside their masters, peering with their long solemn faces into the flames, and, evidently in a state of great comfort, composed themselves for the night. Sheltered from the keen wind by their bodies, and wrapped up in their bernouses, the Arabs were speedily in a state of oblivion of all sublunary things. It was long before we were in a similar condition, for we had not entirely got rid of our enemies of the previous night, and some of the Arabs snored with the power of thunder!

While the description I have attempted, of the ground between Cairo and our present station, is fresh in the reader's mind, this seems the proper place to notice the departure of the Israelites, and to inquire what path they pursued, though, in so doing, we shall be obliged to refer to the subject again, after having inspected the localities near the Red Sea. Opinion is divided between two opposing routes. The general direction of the one may be described with sufficient

accuracy, for our present purpose, by a line drawn on the accompanying rough plan from the upper part of the eastern bank of the Delta to Suez; the other would be indicated by a line passing the site of modern Cairo, and of the ancient Egyptian Babylon, continuing southward as far as the village of Besatin, and then striking directly east, between the mountain ridges of Mokattem and



Tourah, along the Derb-el-Besatin, by which we were now travelling. If we had more definite and certain information regarding the position and boundaries of the land of Goshen, the determination of the route taken by the Israelites on leaving it, would be comparatively an easy matter. Manetho, the Egyptian historian, as quoted by Josephus, evidently includes the descendants of the patriarchs, as part of that nomade tribe, who, coming at a much earlier period from the deserts

of Asia, obtained possession of lower Egypt, and ruled it with such a rod of iron, that, ever afterwards, 'every shepherd was an abomination unto the Egyptians.'—Gen. xlv. 34. He tells us that the object of their first king, Salatis, resident at Memphis, being to guard his eastern frontier from invasion by the Assyrians, he found, 'in the prefecture of Sais, a city very proper for his purpose, on the Bubastic Channel, called Avaris,' which he fortified; and from this city, Avaris, Manetho makes the shepherds 'take their journey *through the wilderness* for Syria.'<sup>1</sup> No trace of such a name can now be found; but as Manetho further states that this name, Avaris, was given to it, 'from a certain theologic notion,' it is quite possible it may have been Bubastis or Heroopolis; at all events, the evidence clearly deducible from his statement is, that the land of Goshen lay along the Bubastic, or most eastern channel of the Nile, since he makes the shepherds take their departure from Avaris.

Josephus, in his own history of the Antiquities of the Jews, informs us that Joseph came forth to meet his father, on his arrival from Canaan, at 'a little town called *Heros*;' and further states, that 'the king gave leave to Jacob, and to his children, to go and dwell in Heliopolis, the place where the royal flocks and shepherds were.'<sup>2</sup> It is not at all improbable that, by the carelessness of some early transcriber, Heliopolis has been substituted for the more obscure Heroopolis; for it is in the highest degree unlikely that Jacob and his sons, being by profession shepherds, and consequently abominations to the Egyptians, would be quartered by Pharaoh in the sacred city of the priests, which Heliopolis or On undoubtedly was; nor is it likely that the king would so far insult that powerful body, as to turn their city into a home-stead for his flocks. The Bull Mnevis, who lived there, and received the worship of the priests, would, no doubt, have signally resented any such injury done to his patrons! From the sacred narrative, we find that it was in the land of Goshen<sup>3</sup> that the meeting took place between Jacob and his long lost son; and, supposing Josephus right in his assertion, that the town of Heros or Heroopolis was the spot, we know that a town of that name was situated near the northern extremity of the Bitter Lakes, in the very direction which

<sup>1</sup> Josephus Contr. Apion, Lib. i., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Antiq., Lib. ii. Cap. 7.

<sup>3</sup> The translators of the Septuagint, who lived near the spot, also identify Heroopolis with the land of Goshen, as will be seen by their rendering of Gen. xlv. 28, where, in our translation, Goshen is twice repeated: Τον δε Ἰουδαν ἀπεστείλεν ἔμπροσθεν αὐτοῦ πρὸς Ἰωσηφ, συναγαγεῖν αὐτῷ καθ' Ἡρώων πόλιν, εἰς γῆν Ῥαμεσσή.

Jacob would take coming down from Beersheba ; which would lead to the same conclusion, with regard to the position of Goshen, as that arrived at from Manetho's statement. In the reason stated above, viz., the antipathy of the priests both to the habits and the religious observances of the Hebrew shepherds, I consider the opinion, advocated by some, that the land of Goshen included the city of Heliopolis, and probably extended as far as the modern Cairo, to be wholly untenable. A body so powerful, that Joseph dared not interfere with their lands, while he acquired for Pharaoh superiority and lordship over the lands of all his other subjects, at the time of the seven years' famine, would not have patiently submitted to the occupation of their lands by a handful of foreigners, even though connected by blood with the prime minister. It is, therefore, probable that the land of Goshen embraced the modern province of Esh Sharkiyah, stretching eastward towards the Desert, and did not extend farther than Belbeis, or Tel el Yakoud, in a southerly direction.

Supposing this the case, are we to look for Rameses at Besatín, or in the neighbourhood of the Salt Lakes, where Heroopolis once stood? On leaving Cairo, the impression on my mind was in favour of Besatín ; but after visiting it, and studying its position in reference to the land of Goshen, I have been obliged to abandon it. The arguments in its favour are—that Goshen must be supposed to have lain as far south as the modern Cairo ; that Pharaoh was at Memphis on the memorable night of the death of the first-born ; and that, if Goshen lay farther to the north and east, it would have been impossible for Moses and Aaron to have answered Pharaoh's call, and to have returned again—set the Israelites on borrowing the jewels of the Egyptians—collected the whole nation at Rameses—and fairly set out on their journey, in the thirty hours which elapsed between midnight of the fourteenth day of the first month, and daybreak of the fifteenth, according to the Jewish mode of reckoning from evening to evening. Such arguments are more plausible than weighty. The objection to placing Goshen about Heliopolis, or further south, has been already stated—a powerful priesthood never would have submitted to the occupation of their lands by a wandering tribe of foreigners, whom they held in detestation. In regard to the second argument, admitting that Memphis was Pharaoh's capital, there can be no doubt that Tanis or San, the ancient Zoan, was also a royal residence, patronized probably during the spring and summer months, as Alexandria now is by the Pasha ; and it is difficult to conceive a reason why, in Ps. lxxviii. 12, the Spirit of inspiration, after naming the land of Egypt, should specify *Zoan*, instead of *Moph.*

as the scene of these judgments, except on the ground that Pharaoh was actually residing there when they were executed: 'Marvellous things did He in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, *in the field of Zoan.*' It is clear 'the field of Zoan' is used in that passage to denote a locality in the land which had just been mentioned: until evidence, therefore, can be brought forward that such is not the meaning of the passage, Tanis or Zoan must be held to have been the abode of Pharaoh when God inflicted His last punishment on the land. The third argument seems of scarcely more weight. It is evident, from the narrative in Exodus (xii. 3, 6), that some days elapsed between the last interview Moses had with Pharaoh, and the final catastrophe at midnight of the fourteenth day; and that the borrowing of jewels (Exodus xi. 2), and other preparations for the journey, including, probably, the gathering to the land of Goshen such of the people as were in slavery at the public works, had been effected in that interval; so that, granting, for the sake of argument, what we have just shown to be untenable, that the king was in Memphis, Moses and Aaron, mounted on dromedaries, or still fleetier horses, could have had no difficulty in accomplishing a journey of 120 miles, from Heroopolis to Memphis and back, in the space of thirty hours—if, indeed, they ever paid a visit to Pharaoh after the death of the first-born. I am inclined to believe, however, that that interview was the final one in which Pharaoh uttered these words: 'Take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die;' and Moses responded, 'Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more' (Exodus x. 28, 29); and that the royal command to depart was carried to Rameses by Pharaoh's servants. It is true we read in Exod. xii. 31. 'He *called* for Moses and Aaron by night;' but the Hebrew verb here used signifies also *to proclaim*; and if the verse had been rendered, 'He issued a proclamation to Moses and Aaron by night,' it would have obviated the apparent contradiction between Moses' solemn leave-taking—thus consigning the hardened offender to his punishment—and his hastening back, despite his word, to the king's presence at the first summons.

There is no doubt Josephus believed the Israelites travelled by the Plain of Besatín, and the route we were now following; for he tells us 'they took the road that leads to Letopolis, then a desert, afterwards the place where Babylon was built, about the time when Cambyses laid waste Egypt.'<sup>1</sup>—the same which now bears the name of Fostat,—

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Antiq., Lib. II., Cap. 15.

though he gives us no hint where Rameses, Succoth, or Etham, were situated. Despite such authority, however, and even supposing, for the sake of argument, that the boundaries of Goshen were situated as far south as Cairo, it is impossible to conceive what motive could have induced the leader to hem in so vast a multitude in a *cul de sac*, formed (as will be seen by the sketch) by the river, the Mokattem Mountains, and the Tourah range, when, to the north of Mokattem, an open country with the shortest route to the Red Sea lay before him for retreat. If Pharaoh was at Zoan, it was trifling with valuable time to turn aside from the direct path that led to the Red Sea; but if, as the advocates of the Besatin route imagine, he was then at Memphis, only a few miles distant on the opposite side of the river, it was downright madness to flare this host in the face of the chafing monarch, as the matadore does his flag, to stimulate the fury of the bull he baits in the ring. For these reasons, I believe the starting point of the Israelites must be sought for, either at Heroopolis, or at some other place to the north and east of the priestly City of On. The journey thence towards the Red Sea would be short, direct, and comparatively easy, along the valley in which the famous canal between the two seas was afterwards cut, which modern science proposes to restore. Further remarks on the course of the Israelites we must reserve until some description has been given of the Red Sea, where, as far as Egypt is concerned, the Exodus was closed.

I may here advert to another interesting inquiry bearing on the same subject. Tradition points to the island of Rhoda, opposite to old Cairo, as the place where the ark of bulrushes rested, and Pharaoh's daughter rescued the child Moses from destruction. This is very unlikely, as not only is the island far from the site of the regal city of Memphis, but the banks of the stream are high and steep, and there is not a reed to be seen now in all the neighbourhood; indeed, the stream rushes along so rapidly, as to make it very improbable that reeds or flags ever could grow there. Mr Lieder, who has paid much attention to the antiquities of Egypt and its Bible localities, believes that the event in question took place in the neighbourhood of Zoan, which, as already remarked, was also a royal residence and a capital of Egypt; and that the ark was found floating in the Pelusiæ branch of the Nile—now a canal—where the waters flowed very sluggishly, and reeds in great numbers are found growing at this day. This opinion is more in accordance with the views above advocated as to the region occupied by the Israelites in Egypt, and I do not hesitate to adopt it. In the inspired account of the transaction, we are told

that his mother 'took an ark of bulrushes, and *daubed it with slime and with pitch.*' The perfect efficacy of the slime or mud of the river itself, for excluding the water, I saw frequently exemplified. The large country boats, bringing down corn from the upper country, are generally laden till the water reaches the gunwale; so that, if they lie over ever so slightly, under a good breeze it is in danger of coming in over the side, and damaging the cargo. To guard against this, I observed that all these boats had a rampart of mud baked round the gunwale, from a foot to a foot and a half high, which became, when dried in the sun, as hard as a wall, and prevented the passage of a drop of water. The mother of Moses, dwelling on the banks of the Nile, no doubt observed and imitated this practice of the ancient mariners; she probably applied the pitch without, and the slime within; and though the caulking might be rude, it was enough to save the life of the 'goodly child.'

15th January.—We rose at a quarter to seven, and were obliged to dress by candle light. The thermometer stood at 43° Fahr., and the morning air was bitterly cold. The Arabs are keenly alive to cold, nor is this to be wondered at, when we consider how slightly they are clad. I am persuaded that no European, boasting of a cotton shirt as his whole wardrobe, and of a thin cloak of goat or camel's hair as bed, bolster, and blanket combined, and sleeping on the ground, could long survive such exposure. The dragoman, first by persuasion, and then by vociferation, aided by pantomimic action of the most violent kind, and at last, I am sorry to say, by adopting the most pithy mode of Arabic abuse, and heaping indecent reproaches upon all the female members of their respective families, tried in vain to make them bestir themselves in packing and loading, for the poor fellows were literally so benumbed as to be unable to lift any weight. They had to kindle a fire and thaw themselves, while the bread was baking; then they had to bring in the camels, which had wandered off to browse with the first gleam of dawn, so that it was half past eight o'clock before the last camel was loaded, and we were again moving forward at the usual snail's pace of two miles and a half an hour. A more striking representation of man's earthly existence in general, and of what the life of a true Christian in particular ought to be,—passing continually onward to a better country, and 'using this present world as not abusing it,'—cannot be conceived, than that employed in Scripture of a pilgrim in the Desert. The aptness of it strikes every reflective mind, but this continual scene-shifting in the barren lifeless wilderness brings it home to the heart with peculiar vividness. Oh for grace to retain



the impression thus made! In a few minutes the tents are struck, the fires extinguished, the camels loaded, and once more a complete silence reigns all around; a few ashes tell the next passer by, that here some 'wayfaring man has turned aside to tarry for a night,' but as far as he is concerned, it is literally true, that 'the place which once knew him, knows him no more.'

It was still so cold, even at half past eight, when we set out, that we preferred walking a few miles, to get into heat, before mounting our camels. Hitherto, our route had led through a narrow valley, shut in by hills on either side, but now the character of the landscape became more open, particularly towards the south, with a constant alternation of ridge and hollow, an idea of which it is difficult to convey to another, otherwise than by describing it as a huge model, in gravel, of a section of the Atlantic, in what is called a *ground swell* after a storm, with a bold headland here and there in view. At 9.45 we passed Ghebel Hairun, running to the north east, and, after clearing its eastern extremity, another large Wadi opened to view, called el-Angabir, running nearly parallel with our route, through which there is a path leading to Cairo and Heliopolis. The range of hills beyond, to the north, our Arabs told us bore the same name as the Wadi. At the end of this range, apparently ten or fifteen miles off to the NE., they pointed out Wadi el Aser, or the 'Valley of the Palace,' through which there is a path to the half-way station on the Indian route, and to a palace in its immediate neighbourhood, built by Abbas Pasha, in the latter years of his grandfather's reign. The appellation of the Wadi is therefore most modern. What strange caprice induced the Pasha to build a palace in such a situation, I have been unable to learn. Not a drop of water is to be found in the neighbourhood, and the supply for the palace, as well as for the adjoining station, has to be brought by this route at great expense, from the Nile near Besatín.

When abreast of the eastern point of Ghebel Hairun, we seemed to reach the summit elevation of Wadi Besatín; for from thence we descended very gradually indeed, but constantly, till we entered Wadi Ghandeli. There was along the line of march a considerable quantity of dwarf shrubs, much to the delight of the camels, who stopped every half dozen yards to have a fresh collation. They are epicures in their own way. Instead of making a snatch at the nearest bush, they fix their eyes at a distance on one which seems greener and more inviting than the rest; on approaching, they make a rush at it, at half trot, with necks as erect as a church steeple, then suddenly dive down their

heads to the no small inconvenience and peril of their riders. Kicks, blows, and desperate tuggings at the camels-hair halter, on the part of the European, produce no effect, he must ride at anchor with what patience he can muster, till the master's voice and cudgel sets the Desert ship once more in motion. Devotly we wished that the shrubs and bushes were only to be found at our halting places. As the camels never walk abreast, so as to admit of fellow travellers carrying on a comfortable conversation, you resolve to seize the next halt your gallant steed makes to resume his luncheon, to address some remark to your friend, but on turning round you most likely perceive him also at anchor before a bush some twenty or thirty yards off, and the idea of conversation is abandoned. While thus rushing among the bushes, the chattels hanging from the camel's side, are often caught and torn or otherwise injured. One of them, in making a desperate rush towards a bush, overbalanced himself, fell on his side, and broke my iron bedstead, which formed part of his load. It is well this did not happen beyond Suez, as a smith can be found there. On the authority of our dragoman and Arabs, we noted during a halt that this Wadi derives its name from a plant used in dyeing. Shortly afterwards Shaheen brought me some sprigs of the wild indigo plant, as that to which he referred, but it must be confessed that the resemblance between the Arabic name for that plant, *Nüleh*, and that of the Wadi, is not perceptible.

Those who imagine that the Israelites left Egypt by the Derb-el-Besatin, fix the position of Succoth, their first halting place, in this neighbourhood. It is true, we have met with more brushwood in this Wadi than in all the rest of our course from Cairo, but if the booths in which they found shelter, were made of branches, there must have been forests in those day in this quarter, which have disappeared without leaving a trace behind. After entering another Wadi called Haimün, our Arabs began to point with the finger towards the horizon, where my eye could make out nothing but the bleak, brown, pebbly hills, which we had been skirting or surmounting all day; accompanying the action with the cry *Ragel, Ragel*, a man, a man! In a moment Nassar, with his baton in hand, and a gun slung on his shoulder, which he had borrowed from one of his companions for the nonce, walked forward to ascertain whether the approaching strangers were friends or foes. The light but firm plant of his foot, the elasticity of his step, the play of sinew in his thin wiry leg, and the gracefulness of every motion of his body, notwithstanding the dirty rotten garment in which he was clad, struck us both with admiration. The rapidity of his

pace on leaving did not appear extraordinary, but we soon ascertained its velocity by the ground he got over. The man who had thus called the Sheikh's guardian qualities into action, proved to be one of the drivers of a string of camels belonging to the Transit Company, on their way to the Nile to bring water to the Central Station. Saláams were exchanged, shaking of hands, and the Káfileh passed on its way within sight, but beyond hail. This incident, trifling as it was in itself, put us all in good spirits, by breaking the monotony of our journey for a moment. With the exception of a rabbit which had run across our path, a few minutes before, they were the first living things we had seen since leaving Besatín.

About half-past two we came in sight of a high conical hill right before us, which seemed to answer the description Mr Lieder had given of Ghebel Reibún, 'the mountain of doubt,' in the neighbourhood of which, from its signification, he supposes 'Etham on the edge of the wilderness' must have been; our Arabs, however, pointed out a chain of hills some miles distant on our right at 2.20, and averred most solemnly that these were called Ghebel Reibún. If this be so, we must already have left the path travelled by Dr Wilson and his friends, for one nearer the transit route, as he describes it as a range which they passed on their left. Leaving this conical hill, we soon entered a large plain called Wadi Sagousa, and pitched our tents a little after four o'clock. The camels after having been unloaded wandered off among the shrubs as usual without any attendant; but we had scarcely got quietly settled under canvass, when their frightful roarings disturbed us all; and the Bedouins flew off in the direction whence the noise came, as if some catastrophe had happened. These roarings are the signs of warfare; and the Arabs did not arrive a moment too soon, for several were engaged in active battle. One of them had been thrown over on the ground, and his adversary was most ungenerously stamping and pounding his fallen foe with his feet, after a fashion which would soon have left us minus one of our baggage carriers. I have already mentioned that the camel is not of so gentle a disposition as some sentimental travellers would have us believe, and in confirmation of this, I may mention that Nassar told us on his return to the tents, after the combatants had been separated, that such encounters were not unfrequent among them; that in their rage they often stamp one another to death; and that he had known instances in which, because his owner had offended him, the animal watched an opportunity when he was kneeling or in a stooping position, and trod him to death before he could be rescued. If this be true, the

camel possesses more of the quiet cunning and vindictiveness of the elephant than he generally gets credit for. This day I found it possible to read with perfect ease while swinging backward and forward on the camel's back, and perused with a vividness of realization altogether new, those portions of Scripture which describe the Lord's judgments on Egypt and the deliverance of His people. In the evening Maitland and I enjoyed some pleasant converse, and closed the first Sabbath in the Desert by reading the Word of God and prayer.

*January 16th.*—The morning air was still bitterly cold; and an *al fresco* breakfast, while the Arabs were pulling to pieces and packing away the tent, held out no temptation to remain long at table, so we were ready long before the loading business was over, and set out on foot to get heated by the exercise. It was eight o'clock ere the last camel was loaded and the Káfileh once more in motion, along the course of the Wadi Lagousa. Half an hour afterwards we came in sight of the palace of Abbas Pasha, and the central station of the Transit Company between Cairo and Suez. From the route along which we were travelling the Arabs reckoned the distance to the palace and station three hours, or not quite nine miles. During the forenoon we met several large caravans of camels laden with charcoal, coming from Túr and its neighbourhood, and bound for the Cairo market. They take this route, though longer, in preference to the Derb-el-Hamra, to avoid the Pasha's palace, because his underlings force them to sell as much as they require at 15 piastres per kantar, whereas they can sell it at 36 piastres in Cairo. They encamp on the hills behind Cairo, where agents from the city come to buy from them. It thus seems from the various scraps of information obtained regarding it, that the traffic on the Derb-el-Besatín is by no means inconsiderable, and during the first day's journey at least, it bore all the appearance of a well travelled road.—A road indeed! If the reader has ever crossed a Cumberland or Highland moor stocked with sheep, he must have often observed among the short grass or heather, half a dozen sheep walks, converging, then diverging again, and sometimes crossing, but all in the main running parallel to one another; and hence, making allowance for difference of size in the animals, he can form a pretty accurate notion of a well travelled road in the Desert. In coming up the Wadi Besatín I counted sometimes as many as a dozen of these tracks, and our camels instead of travelling in a string, were scattered over the Wadi, each selecting his path *à son grè*. I fancy it must have been some freak of the law of contrast, which called up irresistibly to my mind on sight of them, the perplexing network of rails one sees from the carriage-

windows on approaching the terminus of one of the great London railways! After leaving Wadi Lagousa we travelled successively through Wadis Howatát and Megrá Howabra, and entered the Wadi Ramlieh a little after sunset. Innumerable Wadis and water courses crossed, from North to South, those along which we travelled. Some of the hills bordering these valleys are completely covered with pebbles of agate, and yellow jasper, of a dusky yellow or black appearance outside through the action of the atmosphere; and a curious optical delusion was produced by the morning sun shining obliquely on them, for the hill sides seemed to be covered with snow, while we were beginning to dissolve with the hourly increasing heat!

The Wadi Howatát is a large and wide plain which it took us three hours to cross. It is the head quarters of a clan of the Howatát Bedouins, who have deserted the territory of the tribe in the Arabian Desert, near the Gulf of Akabáh, and taken up their abode on the Egyptian side of the Red Sea. Their encampment was visible about a mile to the south of our path; the black tents, as now seen for the first time, with 'distance to lend enchantment to the view,' looked very picturesque, and called to mind Solomon's description of the tents of Kedar. These Bedouins bear a bad character as robbers; and Shaheen advised loading my pistols for protection, which I declined, as none were near to give us any annoyance, and we should be ten or fifteen miles away from their habitations ere we came to our camping ground for the night. They are said to be very hardy, and capable of going for four days without water. If this be the case, they must be made of much harder metal than their brethren, for our Arabs cannot go without water for twenty-four hours without enduring much agony.

All the morning we had seen before us a high and singularly shaped mountain, to which our Arabs gave two names, Ghebel Waibet and Ghebel el Legat; but at one o'clock we came abreast of it where it runs out into the Wadi Howatát on the right hand of our path. The road that we had been following here separates into two branches, that most frequented following a direction E. by NE. to the station No. 5, and there falling into the Transit route direct to Suez. It was by this route that the caravans we met in the morning had come from the Desert. The other path runs a little to the S. of E. along the northern slope of Ghebel Waibet, while between them rises another hill, so covered with the pebbles already described, as to appear literally black, which, on examination, proved to be an argillaceous conglomerate in a state of great decomposition. It contained large quantities of fossil shells, particularly the *Ostrea Diluviana*, from 6

to 8 inches in circumference, in size and shape exactly corresponding with the mother of pearl shells still found in the Gulf of Akabáh, so well known in their polished and sculptured state as forming the staple of the *petite commerce* of the Arab Christians of Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Arabs knew no name for this hill. Between it and Ghebel Waibet runs the Wadi Megrá Howabra which leads into Wadi Ramlíeh.

At the place where these two routes diverge we had our first dispute with Sheikh Nassar. The baggage camels, which were a quarter of a mile in advance of us, were quietly driven along the road leading to the Transit station, in hope that we should follow without asking any questions. He would have thus shortened his journey considerably, and pocketed an extra day's hire for all the camels, which had been paid under the express stipulation that he was to conduct us by Wadi Towarik; but by consulting my compass I felt certain he was leading us astray, and calling a halt, ordered him to come back and explain where the route to the right led to. He acknowledged that it led to Ramlíeh and Towarik, but maintained that it was not safe to travel; so a wordy war, carried on with much gesticulation, ensued, but we cut it short by telling him, that he had been paid to travel an extra day by that route, and we should go by no other, that this was stated in the contract, and that, if he refused, it would be worse for himself, as we should complain to the British Vice-Consul at Suez in order that his name might be struck off the list of Sheikhs at the Consulate in Cairo. Poor Nassar, when he saw we were 'wide awake,' gave up his stratagem with a tolerably good grace, and showed his chagrin in no other way, than by going forward and walking beside the baggage camels, instead of at our side, for an hour. By that time every trace of ill humour was gone, and he resumed his old station.

We had fully more than an hour's ride through the Wadi Megra Howabra before we entered Wadi Ramlíeh, at the head of which we gladly pitched our tents for the night. The heat, during the middle of the day, had been most oppressive; and, so far from getting accustomed to the constant swing of the body, from the motion of the camel, it becomes more painful, in my experience, the longer one submits to it. This might arise from our travelling without a halt from the time we struck tents in the morning, till we pitched them again at night; but the days were then so short, we could not afford to make a midway halt, as travellers generally do a couple of months later in the year. The latter part of this day's journey interested me much, as, supposing the Israelites to have pursued their course down the

valley of the ancient canal from Heroopolis, 'Etham, in the edge of the wilderness,' where the Lord commanded them to turn from the path they had hitherto pursued, might possibly be sought for in the neighbourhood of the station No. 4 of the Transit route, and on this side of Ghebel Atakah. To avoid repetition, however, it is better to reserve any further remarks on this subject, until we have examined Suez and its environs.

*January 17th.*—It was 8 o'clock before the usual routine of breakfasting, squabbling, and packing had been gone through, and we were once more *en route*. At 7 the thermometer stood as low as 43° Fahr. Our ablutions were, as usual, made outside the tent door, and never failed to cause the Arabs the liveliest amusement. I have no doubt they think us very mad to waste so precious a commodity in that way, as their appearance indicates that they never apply it to the outer man, from their birth to the day of their decease! Before our *al fresco* breakfast was over, we were so thoroughly frozen, that it required an hour's smart walking to bring the blood into full circulation again. We required no such exertions to maintain the animal caloric in the afternoon, for, at one o'clock, the thermometer marked 82° Fahr. on the shady side of the camel; thus showing a difference of temperature of nearly 40° in six hours. The sun's rays beat upon us with such fierce heat, that Maitland, notwithstanding the Arab kefiéh upon his head, and the shade of an umbrella, became very unwell, and all but fainted. How forcibly we realized the vicissitudes of Jacob's shepherd life in Haran, when 'in the day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night!' Notwithstanding these inconveniences, it was a day of great excitement, for we expected every moment after noon to catch our first glimpse of the Red Sea, and we knew that our tents would be pitched at night within stone-cast of its memorable waters.

We pursued our way for nearly two hours down the Wadi Ramlieh, expecting, as each new ravine opened up, to hear our Arabs set up the shout of *Moié, Moié, 'Water, Water,'* as in this quarter Dr Wilson describes a chasm, containing pools of water, which his Bedouin escort called the Bir Ramlieh. They strode along, however, with the staid air of men who have a long march before them, with nothing in prospect to break its monotony, either for themselves or their cattle. As the day wore on, towards noon, without any symptoms of deviation from our eastward course, we asked Nassar if we were still far from the Bir Ramlieh. His dark piercing eyes opened wider than their wont, for he evidently did not understand what we

meant; but, after a little explanation, he vehemently maintained that there was no well in the neighbourhood. Was there water, then, for drinking in the rocks? Another negative. We told him he must be mistaken, as Sheikh Mateir had conducted Howajee Wilson to fresh water among the rocks in this neighbourhood. Nassar then called the Arab in charge of Maitland's camels, who has passed most of his life as a carrier between Cairo and Suez, but he declared unhesitatingly, as the former had done, *Mafeesh Bir! Mafeesh Bir!* As the camels had tasted no water since we left Besatin, our guides would have gladly availed themselves of such an opportunity, so that there was no ground for suspecting their ignorance feigned; and I became, therefore, more convinced than ever that our course was not the same as that pursued by Dr Wilson and his party. This conviction was rendered certainty, when, at a later period of the day, we discovered that another Wadi lay between us and the distant Ghebel Atakah, and when we finally made our descent on the shores of the Red Sea, several miles to the south of Wadi Tawarik.

Wadi Ramleh, towards its eastern extremity, assumes the appearance of a plain containing an infinite number of little Wadis, all converging to one wide central duct, which, owing to recent rains, was covered in many places with a thick coating of mud, over which our camels slipped and floundered, in a manner which alarmed us not a little for the safety of our chattels. If seed were cast into this immediately after the winter rains, it is probable that good patches of grain might be raised here, as well as in the Wadi-el-Arish, where we afterwards frequently met with growing crops. There was more vegetation in this Wadi, than we had yet met with in our journey. Some tarfa or tamarisk trees had grown to a respectable size, and there was much of the Retem, or white broom—the juniper tree of Scripture—under which both Hagar and the Prophet Elijah found shelter in the Desert south of Beersheba. The charcoal most highly prized in Egypt, for its heat and slow consumption, is made from the roots of this shrub; and this fact, borne in mind, illustrates strikingly the severity of the punishment which the Psalmist denounces against the false tongue: ‘What shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? sharp arrows of the mighty, with coals of juniper.’—Psalm cxx. 4. I observed here, for the first time, a plant creeping very modestly along the ground, and bearing on its long slender stalks a fruit, in size, form, and hardness of the outer shell like the pomegranate, only a shade or two lighter yellow in colour, while the seeds rattled within, dry and ripe. The Arabs call it Handal, and use it medicin-



ally. I recognized it at once as an old acquaintance, exhibited in glass jars in the windows of every pharmacy in Britain; yet could not for a time recall the English name—Colocynth. It grows in great abundance in the Arabian deserts. I have counted as many as twenty of these apples, on one plant, sprawling along the ground, to the distance of four or five feet from the root—some quite green, others ripe and yellow; while in some these colours are beautifully variegated, as they advanced to maturity. The slender stalk dies away in the autumn; and the traveller who makes acquaintance with it then, for the first time, sees a number of yellow balls scattered at random on the sand, and is at a loss to divine how they could get there, or what purpose they are intended to serve. These yellow balls are the medicine chests of the wild Bedouin; a decoction of Colocynth is his universal panacea; and if his malady yields not to this, he makes up his mind that he has reached his last camping ground. The manner in which they take it, is the following:—Over night, a small hole is made in the top of one of these balls; as much camels' or goats' milk as it will hold is poured in; and the nauseous and bitter draught is drained to the dregs by the patient when he rises at the dawn of day.

About one o'clock we entered the Wadi Badiyeh, similar in aspect to Wadi Ramlieh, but wider in extent, bounded on the north by the range of Ghebel Atakah, apparently about 5 miles distant, and by a parallel range of lower hills to the south, a mile or two distant from our course. For some time before entering it, we had seen before us, far away to the right, a magnificent range of blue mountains, much higher than any we had yet seen in Egypt, called Abou Deraj, or the 'Father of Steps,' which, we afterwards ascertained, rose abruptly from the western shore of the Red Sea, and seemed to stretch away south-westward into the very centre of the country, gradually diminishing in height as it leaves the coast. Between it and the low ridge of calcareous hills to our right, there is a camels' path from Suez to Upper Egypt, along which there is a considerable traffic in grain, dhoura, and pulse. We had not long entered Wadi Badiyeh or Badé, as our men called it, ere, on coming to a rising ground, we caught our first view of the Red Sea. It lay before us directly south, and the sun upon its waves made it dazzling as a sea of crystal. The emotions which it awoke within me it were vain to attempt to describe, but I shall never forget them. I have stood on the Acropolis at Athens, and looked on Marathon; have gazed on the deserted plains of Troy, and passed the straits which Xerxes lashed with chains; I have visited such relics as Italy still can show of her Etruscan and Roman lords,

and have made acquaintance at last with the wonders of the land of Ham, and deep were the emotions produced by them all; but there was something in the first sight of that sea which is proud Pharaoh's grave, that awakened feelings I had never known before. The whole scene seemed to pass with vivid reality before my eyes: the terror and dismay of the Egyptians, as they discovered the fatal trap into which their fool-hardiness had ensnared them; and the joy of Israel as they looked their last on the army of the oppressor. The solemn silence which brooded over mountain and flood, seemed to testify Jehovah's presence still; and there crept over me a sense of His might and majesty absolutely overpowering! These barren mountains must have echoed back the song raised by more than a million voices: 'The Lord is a man of war, the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea. Thou didst blow with Thy wind, the sea covered them; they sank like lead in the mighty waters.'—Exodus xv. 3, 4, 10.

Not long afterwards we had the first view of land on the Asiatic coast,—a single mountain, apparently rising out of the sea, which our guides informed us was Ghebel Hummam Faraoun. 'The Mountain of Pharaoh's Baths,' in the neighbourhood of the Elim of Scripture. The wonderful clearness of the atmosphere may be pretty well conceived of, from the fact that I afterwards found the Hummam Faraoun to be 55 miles distant from Suez. An intervening ridge of hills prevented us from seeing the rest of the Arabian shore for a while; but as we had neared the defile by which we were to descend from the high level on which we had been travelling for two days past, the range of Ghebel et Tih, 'the Mountain of Wanderings,' came fully into view, presenting the appearance of a vast breast-work, built with tiers of different coloured stones, rising in height as it ran south from Suez, until it seemed to end in an isolated fort formed by a conical mountain called Ghebel el Rahah. At length we entered a narrow and steep defile, about half a mile long, bounded on either side by high overhanging cliffs of chalk, full of fossil shells, and came out upon a plain of sand of considerable breadth called Wadi Mousa, between the cliffs and the sea. In the centre of this defile, running nearly its whole length E. and W., there is a ridge of snow-white fossil coral, from which I broke off and brought home some bulky but very beautiful specimens. As we emerged on the plain we turned to the north, and caught a glimpse of Suez, in the distance, with the two Indian steamers at anchor in the bay, but almost immediately lost sight of it again.

A caravan of camels, attended by fellahin from Upper Egypt, were

coming up from the south at that moment, and, with a laudable desire for information, our attendants halted till it overtook us. They had come from villages in the neighbourhood of Thebes, by the road already mentioned, to the north of Abou Deraj, and were going to sell their grain at Suez. They kept company with us till we reached our camping ground, and having halted near us to bake their evening meal, and take a few hours repose, set out again shortly after midnight to reach Suez by sunrise. Shaheen brought us one of their water skins, to taste the water they had found in the Desert; it was strongly impregnated with salt, and had a bitter taste withal; so it may be imagined we made small inroad on their supplies. An hour's ride along the shore brought us abreast of another defile, among the limestone cliffs, similar to that through which we had come between two and three miles farther south. In answer to our inquiries, we were told that this was Wadi Tawarik, through which we intended to have come, and in which Dr Wilson supposes that he discovered the probable site of Pihahiroth. This defile runs westward, apparently close to the southern base of Ghebel Atákah, which now towered in great majesty above us. Opposite the opening of the Wadi, and close to the sea, we encamped for the night, and while preparations were being made for dinner, Maitland and I made diligent use of the remaining day light in picking up the beautiful shells along the shore, of which I brought home a large supply.<sup>1</sup>

In the afternoon, Shaheen gave us, unsolicited, a specimen of his butchering powers, which made us very indignant. Having called to one of the Bedouins to bring him a fowl from the coop, while we were *en route*, he cut its throat with his knife without descending from the camel, and then flung it on the ground, where it fluttered about for a few seconds in its mortal agony, and was picked up by one of the Bedouins. I rebuked him sharply for such wanton cruelty, and told him he should have wrung its neck and put it at once out of pain. I had forgotten that things strangled are among the Mohammedan abominations. '*Signore! il Profeta ci ha insegnato di far così.*' was his reply, 'it is part of our religion to let the blood of every animal we kill, because the blood is the life.' I then told him that Hanna was

<sup>1</sup> They were chiefly clams of delicate and beautiful colours. There were other bivalves of a wedge shape, so delicate and brittle that I had to stuff them with cotton to prevent them being broken. Another shell resembling the ancient Phrygian cap, but of no great beauty, attracted my attention, from its being exactly the same as some of the fossil shells we had seen near Ghebel Waibet and in the ravine of Wadi Badiyah, through which we had just passed.

cook, and that it was his business to kill,—knowing well that the Mohammedan's law had no binding power over him; but for this he had a ready answer too. He did not like to lose his share in anything which might be going, and yet he would not eat meat or fowl killed in any other way than that prescribed by the Koran. 'These beasts of Arabs,' said he, 'will eat anything, however it may have been slain; but I would never eat what was put to death by them or by any Christian!' The matter ended in a compromise, and we never had such a sickening exhibition again.

I wrote my journal till near midnight, and then took a quiet stroll towards the sea, to view it by the light of a bright full moon, with the golden stars reflected on its bosom, and to muse a while on that midnight march which, in the estimation of many, Israel made from this very plain to the opposite shore, with the pillar of fire to light their way, and the pillar of cloud for their rear guard. This locality has been objected to as the scene of the miraculous passage, because the depth of the sea here must have been so great as to preclude the possibility of chariots descending into it. This objection I should suppose more fanciful than real; for in the absence of the authentic information which Moresby's chart would afford as to the actual depth between this and the Arabian shore, it is to be conjectured that the sea bed must bear some resemblance to the ridge and hollow conformation of the whole surrounding district, rather than to the steep and slanting sides of a canal, and if war-chariots could make their way over a surface so broken as that which the country between Cairo and the Red Sea presents, the obstacles within water mark would not be insurmountable.<sup>1</sup>

*January 18.*—Rose at half-past five, and set out in the hope of reaching Suez, about 16 miles distant, at noon. The caravan from Upper Egypt, which set out at midnight, had reported to some of the boatmen on their arrival there, that a party of Franks were encamped by

<sup>1</sup> Having neither Capt. Moresby's chart nor his Examination before the House of Commons at hand, I avail myself of his opinion regarding the matter as I find it in the following extract from Dr Aiton's work. 'In answer to this distinct exposition, I state from my own ocular demonstration, and on the authority of Capt. Moresby, who surveyed this gulf accurately as to width, depth, and bottom; and at the place where the passage was made, according to his conviction and mine, there is a gradual inclination from the shore on to the side of the sea, such as horses and chariots could easily take.'—*Lands of Messiah, Mahomet, and the Pope*, p. 115. This was at a point between Abou Deraj and Ghebel Zafaraneh, thirty miles farther down the coast than the entrance of Wadi Tawarik.

the shore near Wadi Tawarik; and just as we were starting, a lateen-rigged coble ran into a creek below our camping-ground, and two bare-legged fishermen advanced to invite us to sail up to Suez, whilst the camels travelled round the wide bay. Maitland's inquiries as to whether the passengers for the Indian steamers had arrived from Cairo having been answered in the negative, we were for a moment tempted to accept their services, in order to enjoy a change of posture after five days' jogging on camels; but two considerations finally led us to give the preference to our desert steeds; one was that the boatmen were honest enough to confess that it would be 3 o'clock before we could reach Suez by sea, while our Arabs promised to be there by noon; the other, that my companion's anxiety regarding the danger of missing his passage being now relieved, we both desired to inspect the coast between this and the town, from some point of which the passage of the Israelites must undoubtedly have taken place. At nine o'clock we were abreast of a rocky promontory which runs out for a considerable distance into the sea, called Ras Atakah, opposite to which, on the Arabic coast, there is a corresponding one of yet greater length—Ras Meshallah. The distance between their extreme points has been ascertained to be exactly six and a half geographical miles. The sea is narrower here than at any other point below Suez, and supposing the Israelites either to have come down Wadi Tawarik, or to have marched from 'Ajrud along the path we are now following, this is the place which would naturally be selected for the passage, and it agrees well with the conditions of time and distance requisite for that event stated or implied in the sacred narrative. From this point Suez seemed not more than eight miles distant as the crow flies; but the camel's path, instead of leading in a direct line close to the foot of Ghebel Atakah, winds round the head of innumerable creeks and headlands, most unnecessarily increasing the length of the journey; besides which there is a deep sandy bay stretching far to the west of the town, in following the curvature of which, we seemed, from the absence of any intervening object to aid the eye in judging of distance, to toil along without ever getting nearer the goal. The shells were so beautiful and in such profusion, that I often got down to pick them up while the camels followed the tortuous path, as there was no difficulty in overtaking them by a shorter cut.

During the course of the day we started several gazelles, which bounded off, but not with the rapidity and signs of fear usually ascribed to them. When 200 or 300 yards off they stood still again, conscious that they had nothing now to fear. The fact is, gunpowder

is too precious a commodity in the estimation of an Arab to be wasted upon them; and I fancy the few Englishmen resident at Suez have little leisure time for the chase.

Whilst walking on foot round a part of the deep bay already referred to, attended by Aleiwa, one of our escort belonging to the Aleikat tribe, a good-natured, funny fellow, who had always an eye to a biscuit or a cigar, and made himself most useful in picking up shells, etc., we came upon a bird fishing in the sea, a few yards from the beach, which he called *Wuss*, the Arabic name for goose. Tall and aristocratic looking, with snowy plumage, lined with red under the wings, I began to wonder if he were a young flamingo or a new species of heron; but a nearer view dissipated the interest I was prepared to feel in him. He was nothing more than a poacher—a crane living by his wits, who had come forth to plunder after the fashion of the desert. A little farther on I espied a huge dogfish or young shark, stretched out at full length on the sandy bottom, sunning his hideous form in the shallow water, and directed Aleiwa's attention to him as a passing object of curiosity; but he looked upon him at once in the light of the camp-kettle, as an edible speculation, and, much to my amusement, dashed into the sea in pursuit. Finding the water deeper than he expected, he came out, and began to shout to one of his companions, some way in advance, the owner of the only sword in the caravan, to bring it to him. Hitherto the fish had not perceived him, but the shouting evidently aroused his attention. I could distinctly see him vibrating his fins, as if making ready for a start, though he did not move from his lair; but no sooner had Aleiwa, with his only garment gathered round his neck, and with drawn sword in hand, made a spring like a tiger upon the place where his victim lay, than the shark darted off, and the sword was buried wellnigh to its hilt in the sand.

To complete the zoological catalogue of the day, Nassar shortly afterwards killed a viper, about two feet long, which darted across the path just under the camel's feet. We observed, while skirting Ghebel Atákah, many chambers hewn out in the rock, wherever it presented a perpendicular face, similar to some we had observed in Ghebel Tourah, opposite Memphis; and there can be little doubt that they were originally used as sepulchres by the inhabitants of the ancient Clysma or Kolzium, though their present possessors are the wild beasts of the field. After mid-day the heat was overpowering, though the thermometer only marked 82° Fahr., and we witnessed, for the first time, that phenomenon so peculiar to the desert, a *mirage*. We

had seen for some time previously, at the distance of many miles to the NW., over a flat sandy plain, the second station on the Transit route, and the telegraph tower beside it. Suddenly, on turning our eyes in that direction again, the whole scene was changed. A broad expanse of deep blue water, like an inland lake, lay before us, far as the eye could reach, and in the middle of it an island, on which stood apparently a small fortress and a lighthouse. The whole scene seemed so real and lifelike, that it was long before we could convince ourselves that it was all an optical delusion. It is when the sun's heat is greatest, and when, therefore, the traveller's discomfort and thirst are at their height, that this strange delusion generally takes place; and it is easy therefore to realize what the bitterness of blighted hope must be in the breasts of those who are scorching under a summer's sun, when the deep cool waters give place to the endless arid desert again. Sir John Chardin and others speak of it as the effect of the repercussion of the sun's rays from the sands of the Desert, and it generally has the flickering appearance of a landscape seen through the columns of heat and vapour proceeding from a brick-kiln or furnace.' The Arabs call it *Serâb*, as the Hebrews did before them.

As we approached Suez, we saw, at a considerable distance to the north, the Bir es Suweis, or 'Well of Suez,' and between it and us a very large drove of camels were on their way to fetch water for the town. It is said to be so salt as to be unfit for drinking, the inhabitants making use of it sometimes for culinary purposes, but chiefly for washing. I learned afterwards from Mr Air, the agent for the Peninsular and Oriental Company, and from Mr Dempsey, at the hotel, that the drinkable water is supplied to the town from the wells of Ayun Mousa, and from the springs of Ghurkudda,<sup>1</sup> some miles inland from the opposite Arabian shore; but the water from these sources is also brackish and far from palatable. The Europeans resident in Suez have all the water they drink brought from the Nile on camels; and so precious is it, that, while they leave wine and other commodities in the power of their servants, they keep the Nile water under lock and key, as it is a temptation which a native cannot resist. Mr Air also mentioned that the supply of water required by the passengers and crew of the steamers is obtained from an excellent well at the foot of Ghebel Abou Deraj, between 30 and 40 miles distant. They send down large barges full of water-barrels for this purpose. Near the well there are the ruins of a church and convent of the early

<sup>1</sup> Burckhardt calls these springs Naba.—*Travels in Syria*, p. 466.

ages, most probably Coptic.<sup>1</sup> It was half-past two ere we reached Suez; and leaving its miserable citadel and tumbledown walls to the right, we pitched our tents at the foot of a mound to the north of the town, which marks the site of the ancient Clysma, supposed by some to have been the Pihahiroth of the Scripture narrative.

While I was engaged giving Shaheen his orders, Maitland having sent forward his baggage camel to unload at the hotel, had made Nassar and his people supremely happy by a *backshish*, to purchase a sheep or a kid for a feast. Nassar came up as Sheikh, and, after a profound *salám*, shook him warmly by the hand; the others then came up, in turn, to take leave of him, shouting in chorus, '*Salám Aleikoun,*' and '*Kateir Herug, Howajee,*' Many thanks, master! The feast came off in the evening, when they sung songs in honour of the Howajee who was going to India, and danced round the camp-fire, but neither of us was present. A few Egyptian soldiers loitered round the gate of the town, on entering which, we came into a large irregular and filthy square, and passing one or two half-ruined mosques, and miserable one-storied mud huts in abundance, we at last emerged on the quay, where there are two or three large and respectable buildings, one occupied by our vice-consul and the post-office; another by the Peninsular and Oriental Company; while the third and largest of all, the property of the Pasha, is the hotel for the accommodation of passengers to or from India. The place seemed at first deserted; but, after beating for a while at the door, we gained admittance to a vast quadrangular court, surrounded by buildings two stories high, the lower consisting of stables, coach-houses, luggage-rooms, sheep-pens, etc., and the upper serving as the hotel. As the arrival of the English steamer at Alexandria had not yet been telegraphed, no travellers were expected, and there was a dreary stillness about the place, that was far from encouraging; but, on getting up stairs, the aspect of things was changed for the better; everything was clean and comfortable; and the sight of a snug bedroom, with spacious bed and ample

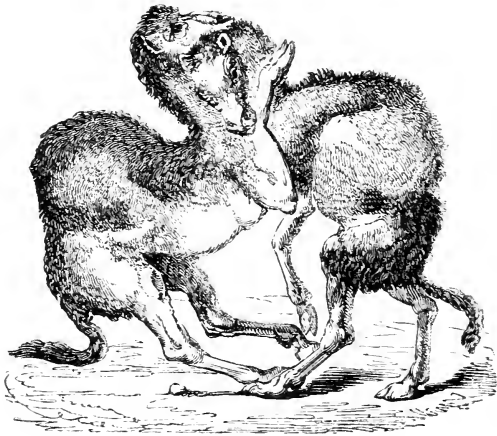
<sup>1</sup> It is to this convent probably that Burckhardt refers in the following passage, though I heard nothing of naphtha. 'At one or two days' sail from Suez is an ancient Coptic convent, now abandoned, called Deir Zafaran or Deir el Araba; it stands on the declivity of the mountain at about one hour from the sea. Some wild date-trees grow there. At the foot of the mountain are several wells, 3 or 4 feet deep, upon the surface of whose waters naphtha or petroleum is sometimes found in the month of November. It is of a deep brownish-black colour, and of the same fluidity as turpentine, which it resembles in smell.'—*Travels in Syria*, p. 468.



washing apparatus, was too much for my philosophy; and the resolution I had made to return to my tent in the evening was straightway given to the winds. I conceived a great respect for 'mine host,' when I found him deeply engaged in the study of Arabic. It is evident that both he and Mrs Dempsey are much superior to the station they at present occupy; and the solitude of this miserable place, though broken by a noisy bustling crowd from the east and west once a fortnight, must be very trying. One of the first questions Mr Dempsey put to me, on learning I was Desert-bound, was whether I had Dr Aiton's book with me. Lord Falkland, who had passed that way a fortnight before, had a copy of it, which he had lent him for a day, and he was anxious to resume the perusal where he broke off at his lordship's departure. Unfortunately I could not gratify him, as I had read the Doctor's work before leaving home, and I had no room for a large library in my portmanteau. They told me he had resided for some time in their house, and, from the terms in which they spoke of him, he appeared to have left a most favourable impression behind him.

We set out immediately to visit the bazaars. They are more extensive than one would suppose, from the size of the place, but contain no great variety of wares. Wheat, maize, and lentils, woollen and cotton cloths, silks, shoes, chibouks, and rusty arms, seemed to be the chief commodities. A blacksmith's shop at last was found at the very extremity of the bazaar, and Shaheen had nearly completed a bargain for the repair of the broken bedstead, when Maitland and I came up to the spot. The sight of two Franks immediately altered the state of the case; our friend of the anvil and bellows raised his price ten per cent. in a moment; and as he is the only son of Tubal-Cain of whom the place can boast, he was obstinate, because he knew we were in his power. It is but justice to him to confess that he executed his work in a satisfactory manner. While Shaheen and he abused one another, and gradually approached a bargain, our attention became rivetted on what was going on in the next shop or stance, separated only by a partition wall from the blacksmith's forge, because it supplied an omission in our sight-seeing at Cairo. We had heard that there were certain coffee-houses in the capital, where men were in the habit of smoking opium and *hashish*, which is hemp-seed prepared in the same way, and much stronger in its effects. The place before us was one of these coffee-houses; and, squatted cross-legged on the floor, six of the Suezians were deep in the mysteries of hashish, which they smoked with the *chibouk* and *shishah*. All were already

more or less under the influence of this powerful narcotic: in some the eye shone with an unnatural lustre; in others it was dim and heavy, as if they struggled against sleep; while all exhibited that unnatural pallidity of countenance, which distinguishes the confirmed opium taker. Besides those who were actually smoking, several others lay stretched along the ground at the back of the shop, wrapped up in their abias, in a state of the most profound insensibility; indeed, it was the corpse-like hue and appearance of these drugged sleepers which first attracted our notice. These narcotics are sometimes smoked alone, sometimes mixed with tobacco; and we were assured that their use is on the increase, both here and in Cairo. A considerable quantity of opium is smuggled into Suez by the seamen employed on board the Indian steamers, and greedily bought up; though I am told it is not held in such high estimation by the *habitués* as the *hashish*. After an hour spent on the spacious flat roof of the hotel, from which the best view of the bay, the town, and all the surrounding country is to be had, and another devoted to a most agreeable visit to Mr and Mrs Air, we did ample justice to the excellent dinner mine host had provided for us; then followed a walk beyond the walls, to see that all was safe in the tents, after which we retired to enjoy a sleep, unbroken by the noisy voices of the Arabs, or by the camels stumbling against the tent ropes to the manifest danger of the frail tenement.



## CHAPTER III.

## SUEZ TO FEIRAN.

*January 19th.*—It had been arranged that the camels, starting before daybreak, should make the journey round the head of the narrow bay that runs up about 4 miles above Suez, so as to be at Ayun Mousa before noon, while I proceeded thither in a boat. But when did an Arab ever keep his time in starting? Nassar and his companions had to buy food for their camels, and further household stores for their families, and even Shaheen himself had not bought what he wanted, so that they only got in motion about 8 o'clock, when they ought to have been already half-way to Ayun Mousa. There was no use, therefore, in my setting out so early as had been originally fixed upon. At breakfast, Maitland determined to accompany me to the wells, as no telegraphic despatch had arrived announcing the approach of the Indian mail and passengers, and it was therefore certain the steamers could not start before next morning at the earliest. I was glad to have his company for another day; so that it was arranged that we should sail down the bay, and that Mr Dempsey should despatch a donkey to convey him back to the quarantine-ground opposite the hotel, where a boat would be in waiting to bring him over the narrow ferry. As I should not have another opportunity of despatching a letter for upwards of a month—even if all went on prosperously—and as it was possible that, through some unforeseen occurrence, I might find a grave in the Desert, far short of Jerusalem, I employed my early morning hours in writing home to my family, and then betook myself to the roof of the house, in order to engrave on my memory every line and feature of the surrounding country.

As some who cast their eyes over these pages may have 'the bump of locality' as strongly developed as I fancy it must be in my cranium, from the delight which mental topography affords me, it may be well to attempt for their gratification a hasty sketch of the scenery on which the eye rests from the broad flat roof of the Transit Hotel. Suppose yourself, then, kind reader, standing with me on the roof of this hotel, which is built almost at the extremity of a narrow spit of sand running into the Red Sea, with your face directed towards the east. On your right hand—to the south—you have the Red Sea, with its broad expanse of deep blue water, finely set off by the yellow

fringe of sand along its shores, and hemmed in east and west by the mountains of Africa and of the Arabian peninsula, far as the eye can reach. The Red Sea can boast of no mercantile or royal navy now as in the days of David and Solomon;—were it not for those two British steamships which lie anchored some miles below the town, and a few fishermen's barks creeping along the shore, it would be as complete a solitude, as some virgin lake in the wildest and most inaccessible Highland glen. On your left hand, to the north, you have the flat uninteresting gravelly desert, stretching onwards to the shores of the Mediterranean. Behind you are the motley dwellings and dilapidated walls of the town; and beyond them, in the distance, the mountains of Atakah. Looking before you eastward you have close at your feet a narrow channel, running past the spit on which the hotel is built for about 4 miles to the northward, and at no point exceeding a mile in breadth, though generally much narrower. About a mile above the town, near the mounds of the ancient Clysma, there is a ford at low water, used as a short-cut by the Suezian water-carriers on their way for supplies to the wells of Ghurkudda; indeed, looking at it from this distance, it seems to be nearly dry land all the way across. Between it and the hotel, drawn high up on the shore, are a number of native craft, high pooped and beaked, probably degenerate descendants of the Grecian and Roman war-galleys, which are launched at the time of the Hadj to convey to one of the sea-ports of Arabia those pilgrims who prefer a modified beatitude to all the risks of the terrible land journey! Beyond this narrow channel you have, at a distance, varying from 5 to 10 miles, the Ghebel et Tih, a lime-stone range, striking from its precipitous character, the horizontal regularity of its strata, and its varied colours and grotesque shapes, and suggesting the idea of another Chinese wall, only built by Cyclopean hands. Between the sea and these mountains the desert tract of land in front of us, which reaches away to the north and east, is the wilderness of Shur, through which a way anciently led from Egypt up to Palestine, much to the south of what may be called the high road by Tanis, El-Arish, and Gaza.

After having mastered the general features of the country the inquiry becomes doubly interesting: At what place is it most likely that the miraculous passage of the Israelites was effected? There is considerable diversity of opinion on this point among those who have visited and carefully examined the localities. There are three theories, each supported by respectable names, which pretty well exhaust the subject. The first of these, put forward by Niebuhr, and supported

by Dr Robinson, is, that the passage of the Israelites was across the narrow channel above the town of Suez, or across the narrowest part of the bay, immediately to the south and west of the town, where there are now shoals, of considerable extent, perfectly dry at low water. Dr Robinson prefers the latter; but in order to give some appearance of credibility to this theory, he is obliged to suppose that the Red Sea in those days was much deeper and broader in the vicinity of Suez than it now is—a hypothesis in support of which it would be difficult to bring forward either Scriptural or geological evidence. None of the conditions requisite for the fulfilment of so great a miracle are to be found in the channel above the town. The passage is so narrow, even where he supposes their march to have been, that there could not have been space for both the host of Israel and the army of Egypt within low-water-mark at the same time, unless it were got in the breadth of land dried up, instead of its length; the depth of water, judging from its present condition, was not sufficient to have drowned all that host; and, with the head of the sea only four miles distant, the horsemen and chariots of Egypt might, with the utmost ease, have sped round by the shore in time to interrupt the landing of the Israelites, without exposing themselves to any risk of disaster.

Another theory advanced by Captain Moresby, the author of 'The Chart of the Red Sea,' and supported by Dr Aiton, makes the passage of the Israelites take place full 40 miles to the south of Suez, between the mountains of Abou Deraj and Ghebel Zafferaneh. Dr Aiton has published in his book a letter from Captain Moresby, from which the following is a short extract: "We thought it well to examine minutely the locality between the Abooderadge mountains and Trafarana. Now here we found an open valley of six or seven miles in breadth, near to the south end of Abooderage. By this pass between the hills Egypt can be approached; and, in our opinion, it is probable that the Israelites came by it from the land of Goshen. If they really came by this way, on arriving at the Red Sea they would find themselves fairly entangled by the land. They could not turn to the left to go round the base of the Abooderadge mountains, which are so abrupt that it is impossible. Here, also, it is remarkable that the sea is narrower than at any other part, there being only 13 miles between Ras Abooderadge and Ras Ligiya, a low sandy point on the opposite shore, with a depth of water in the middle of 39 fathoms, or 234 feet."<sup>1</sup> This theory is more objectionable than the

<sup>1</sup> 'Aiton's Lands of the Messiah,' p. 122.

former. The Israelites must have left the valley of the Nile by some opening in the mountains above Tourah, consequently to the south of Memphis, and wandered in a south-easterly direction through unexplored regions, until they fell into the valley between Abou Deraj and Zaffaraneh; but the only reason assigned by the promoters of this theory for adopting it seems to be, that, in their opinion, if the Israelites had crossed to the wells of Ayun Mousa and drank water there, the Scripture account must be set aside, which declares they went 3 days in the desert, until they came to Marah, without finding water. 'I repeat,' says Dr Aiton, 'that my only hesitation in adopting entirely the views of Dr Wilson, is founded on the fact that the Israelites must have landed in this case not far from the wells of Moses, where they would have found plenty of water on the very shore; whereas we have the authority of Scripture for saying that for three days after they landed on the promontory of Sinai they were absolutely without water, that is, till they came to Marah.'<sup>1</sup> Had Dr Aiton travelled from Ayun Mousa to Howarah (Marah) he would have found that the distance is exactly such as would have required 3 days for the journey of a host so encumbered as the Israelites were, thus agreeing minutely with the Scripture account; whereas, if they had crossed from Ras Abou Deraj to Ras Ligiyah, as he and Captain Moresby suggest, they would have landed a few miles beyond Marah, and been compelled to retrace their steps to reach it, while a single day's march from this landing point would have brought them to the wells and palm-trees of Elim, and what then becomes of the truth of the Scripture narrative?

The third theory which has been propounded as to the locality of the miracle, by Drs Wilson, Olin, and others, is, that the Israelites crossed the bed of the Red Sea from the mouth of the Wadi Tawarik, to a spot near the wells of Moses. Dr Wilson supposes that the passage took place from Ras Atakah to Ras Meshallah, on the Arabian shore, where the sea is narrower than at any other point below Suez, the distance between the two promontories being exactly six and a half geographical miles. This distance is not too great for the host of Israel to have accomplished during the darkness of an April night, while at the same time it gives room for the miracle, which the first theory does not, and fully explains why the Egyptians followed them in so perilous a path; as, had they attempted to round the head of the bay, Israel would have escaped from their reach before they could

<sup>1</sup> 'Aiton's Lands of the Messiah,' p. 116.

have arrived at the wells of Mousa. After most careful and minute examination of the localities, I feel shut up to the conclusion that this route is the only one which will satisfy all the conditions of the miracle and of the sacred narrative.

But, though agreeing fully with those who make Ras Atákah the point from which the Israelites marched through the Red Sea, I cannot conclude with them that it was by the Wadi Tawarik that the Israelitish host was led to that spot. Though I had been obliged to relinquish the idea that they came out of Egypt by the Derb-el-Besatín, I still thought it probable that 'Etham on the edge of the wilderness' might have lain not far to the north of Ghebel-el-Legat, at the mouth of Wadi Ramlieh, and that by turning off there from the direct path between Heroopolis and the head of the sea, and putting the range of Ghebel Atákah between them and it, the Egyptians might truly have said with regard to Israel, 'they are entangled in the land, and the wilderness hath shut them in;' but, after getting down to the seashore, and pursuing its course northward to Suez, I was obliged to abandon the idea, as the features of the country do not seem at all to correspond with the description given in Scripture of the checkmate position into which they had got by their last movement. Having travelled down the Wadi Badiyeh, which lies several miles to the south of Wadi Tawarik, I found that on that side there are no hills so lofty or inaccessible as to make escape from the latter valley an impossibility; that to a host emerging from Wadi Tawarik, the sea, and not the land, is the barrier to a forward movement, while from the mouth of this Wadi a plain of ample breadth for the march of an army, lying between the shore and the base of Ghebel Atákah, stretches away northward towards 'Ajrud, the head of the sea, and the site of Heroopolis, so that it never could be affirmed of Israel, with such an outlet, that 'the land had shut them in.' By this northern route they would have found escape from Pharaoh's foes in their rear with the utmost ease, unless he had taken the precaution of stationing another army in this plain to prevent their passage, of which we have not the remotest hint in Scripture. Of course the difficulty of coming to a positive and unhesitating conclusion as to the route pursued by the Israelites is very much increased by the fact, that there is not to be found the slightest trace, either in ruin or in phonetic resemblance, of the three localities mentioned in connection with the Hebrew encampment—Pihahiroth, Migdol, and Baal Zephon.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr Aiton, p. 125, was informed by one Hotzimanoli, a native of Suez, that the name Baal Zephon still existed at some spot near Ras Zaffaraneh.

On the supposition that the Israelites set out from Heroopolis, and continued their march down the valley of the canal, the difficulties indicated as attaching to the former route do not occur. Until they arrived at Etham they were manifestly pursuing the direct course to Sinai, and the Egyptians seem to have had no mind to follow; it was only after the Lord had commanded them to turn from the direct path at that point that their enemies, supposing them to have mistaken their course through ignorance of the country, began to entertain hopes of again enslaving them. This place was probably not far from the Khalat 'Ajrud, a small fortress eight or ten miles to the north-west of Suez, on the Haj route from Cairo to Mecca, which passes near the head of the sea. Marching in a southerly direction from thence towards Ras Atákah, their position would be exactly such as to lead Pharaoh to say, 'They are entangled in the land, and the wilderness hath shut them in;' for instead of the way of escape hitherto practicable towards the east, the Red Sea became now an impassable barrier on their right hand, and Ghebel Atákah on the left. The wilderness, with Abou Deraj in the distance, prevented escape to the south, and they must therefore either be cut to pieces in their encampment, where the land so completely entangled them, or submit to be driven back through the Wadi Ramlieh to Egyptian servitude again. Besides, by this route, supposing we may place reliance on Hotzimanoli's statement to Dr Aiton, that Baal Zephon was situated somewhere on the Abou Deraj mountains, the position of the camp of Israel must literally have been 'over against Baal Zephon;' that is, facing it, and also 'before it,' as the plain of Badiyah or Wadi Mousa, lay between them and the foot of the mountains. I wish there had been time enough at my command to have traced up the valley in which the ancient canal was dug as far as the Crocodile Lakes and the site of Heroopolis, for the more complete elucidation of the subject; but from observations made both in the valley of the Nile and at Suez, and carefully compared with the Scripture narrative, I feel inclined to believe that this must have been the line of route taken by the Israelites, though in doing so I regret to differ in opinion from my friends Dr Wilson and Mr Lieder. As to the exact spot where the passage took place there has been, and will still be, no doubt, difference of opinion; but on this point all who believe the word of God are agreed that somewhere within a few miles of the spot where we stood when taking our last survey of Suez and its neighbourhood, Jehovah led His people between watery ramparts, across the dry bed of this very sea, and made its liberated waves the last executors of His wrath on Pharaoh



and his host : ' The Lord is a man of war : the Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea : his chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea ; the depths have covered them : they sank into the bottom as a stone.'—Exod. xv. 3. 4. 5.

At mid-day Shaheen announced that the boat was waiting, so bidding adieu to my literary host, we embarked on the Red Sea, known by the boatmen only as Bahr Suweis ; ran through the narrow channel between sandbanks in the bay, and soon left Suez behind. The immense hotel, glaring with whitewash, backed by two or three paltry minarets, is the most prominent object which Suez presents from the sea. We passed within a short distance of the H.E.I.C. steam-frigate 'Feroze,' which had brought home Lord Falkland, and of the P. and O. steam-ship, 'Bentinck,' but did not pay a visit to either. Whatever be the colour of the waters of this sea near the Straits of Babel Maudeb (it is said their surface is red with some animal deposit), I can vouch that here they are as blue as the waters of the Mediterranean, and so beautifully clear that, in sailing along, we could make out the sandy bottom, with patches of rock and seaweed, at an immense depth. With a fine fresh breeze from the north-east, we ran down in two hours to a ras or point, where the boatmen told us we must land, as the water is so shallow near the coast that it is only at certain places a boat can approach it. Even there we had to be carried about a hundred yards on the shoulders of our boatmen before we reached dry land. After landing on a sandy beach, we had a most fatiguing walk for two miles, before reaching Ayun Mousa, through fine shifting sand, such as I had formerly supposed prevailed throughout all the Desert, and in such quantities as we had not met with since leaving the Pyramids. Maitland's donkey and *hamarjee* were waiting for us at the wells, but my *Káfileh* was nowhere to be seen.

At the wells we found five gardens, enclosed by slight fences formed of reeds or palm branches, in three of which stood pretty whitewashed cottages, well shaded by tarfa trees, which grow there in abundance. One of these cottages belongs to Mr Levick, now the British post-master at Suez ; another belongs to M. Costa, the French vice-consul ; and the third to a native merchant at Suez. The other two gardens belong to Maltese residing also in Suez. At present there are a dozen wells open, one, and sometimes two, in each garden ; the rest beyond the garden enclosures, beside an old stunted palm, of which Bartlett has given a faithful representation in his book.<sup>1</sup> It is singular that the

<sup>1</sup> Forty Days in the Desert, p. 27.

water in some of these wells is much more brackish and disagreeable than in others. The impression of the residents is, that it does not rise from springs on the spot, but makes its way through the sand from the neighbouring mountains. The supply of water never fails during summer, but at that season it always suffers a considerable diminution in quantity. Around these wells, in all probability, Israel encamped for the first time on the Arabian shore, and here the women, with timbrels in hand, danced and sung in chorus to the song of Moses. Mrs Levick and her family were residing in their cottage, and through her kindness, the servants were permitted to fill a barrel and the water-skins from one of the wells in her garden, which contains the best water in the place. Cabbages, radishes, and other kitchen herbs were cultivated in all the gardens; but in the French vice-consul's particularly, I observed, besides the tamarisk and palm trees, pomegranate, fig, olive, and almond trees, in a most flourishing state, thus proving that the saline nature of the soil is not inimical to the growth of the best fruit trees. This year the gardens are in a miserable condition, owing to a visit paid to them lately by some of the Pasha's horses returning from Tûr in his son's suite, which had broken down the fences and devoured all their contents. They are cultivated by some of the neighbouring Bedouins, who live in little mud huts built within the enclosures. At 3 o'clock the camels arrived, and on being unloaded, they crowded round the four public wells to the east of the gardens. They had now been seven days without tasting water, and they testified much impatience while the Arabs drew it for them. The water was raised by the shadoof, as in Egypt, viz., by a long pole, balanced on a shaft, to one end of which a heavy stone is attached, and to the other end of the lever, a skin with an iron rim, to keep it extended while filling in the well. The average depth of the wells is from 5 to 6 feet.

After partaking of a slight lunch, Maitland left me at half-past three to return to Suez. I accompanied him a short way, and parted from him with sincere regret. From the time I embarked at Leghorn we had been constantly together, and a more pleasant and intelligent companion could not be desired. He went to Calcutta to manage a large mercantile establishment, leaving wife and children behind him; and in the solitude of my tent at night, I commended him, both in his temporal and spiritual affairs, to the keeping of that great Jehovah whose mighty deeds we had recalled together on the shores of this sea; whose 'hand is not shortened that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy that it cannot hear.' Those who, 'living at home at ease,'

have felt the blank occasioned by the departure of some friend, who has occupied for a time a place in the family circle, will not be surprised that in my peculiar circumstances, alone in the Desert, with the Bedouins henceforward as my only companions for many a day, I felt the sense of solitude and dreariness that afternoon, when my friend—who was the last link connecting me with the civilized world—was beyond recall, more acutely than ever before in the course of my life. What a comfort it was to be persuaded that He who led Israel in safety through the waste and howling wilderness would go with me, and that under His guardianship I had nothing to fear!

Though the present habitations are all most modern, yet there are some traces of more ancient and permanent occupation. While walking round the garden enclosures, I found to the NE. an old fort; and I called in the course of the evening on Mrs Levick to thank her for her courtesy in permitting us to draw water from the well in her garden, I was informed that, while digging in search of water, they had discovered a well, which had been carefully and regularly built, probably by the same hands which constructed the fort. Whilst conversing about the news from Cairo and the people I met there, among others Lieutenant Burton of the Indian army, who had visited Mecca in the disguise of an Affghan merchant, without being detected, from his perfect knowledge of the language, she told me that on his return he had passed by Suez, and the indignation of its Mussulman population was extreme when they learnt that a Christian in disguise had gained admittance to the holy city, and had seen the mysteries which are kept so jealously guarded from infidel eyes. From her I learned that two English gentlemen had passed by Ayun Mousa *en route* for Sinai, Petra, and Jerusalem, only two days before me. I hoped to overtake them at Sinai, but found, on my arrival there, that they had left the previous day, and it was only at Jerusalem that we finally met. After a short but pleasant visit I took my leave; and, more than a year afterwards, I learned from a mutual friend, that Mrs Levick had given me an invitation to breakfast next morning, and was much surprised to find, when the time came, that our party were already far on their way to the Desert of Etham. It is scarcely necessary to add, that I had not understood her invitation; but should these pages ever fall under her eye, I avail myself of the opportunity to thank her for her hospitable intentions towards an utter stranger.

If, by reason of the projected railway and ship-canal, the European population should increase on the shore of the Red Sea, it would

not surprise me to hear that this small colony at Ayun Mousa shall have become the nucleus of a town which rivals Suez. It enjoys three blessings which Suez wants, good air, water, and the shade of trees; and these will attract Europeans, even though the heads of the families have to visit Suez daily during business hours. If ever a mission be undertaken to the simple kind-hearted Towerah; and now that attention has been awakened, especially to the evangelization of the nations dwelling within the dominions of the Porte, I trust the day is not far distant when the attempt will be made—the station of Ayun Mousa might possibly be the head-quarters of the missionary. His family would thus enjoy protection during his absence on missionary visits to Tûr, Wadi Feiran, etc., and have the advantage of a little European society.

*January 20th.*—A wolf paid a visit to our quarters during the night, and put the fowls into a state of great commotion; but Shaheen, having been disturbed by the noise, disappointed him of his prey. We were up shortly after 6, tents struck and packed, and all ready for loading, when a long and sharp dispute arose between Nassar and one of his men about the amount of baggage which his camel was licensed to carry. Hoping, as they had already had seven days for the adjustment of the burdens, the dispute would soon be over, I began to sketch the old palm-tree beside the wells; but after the war of words had continued for nearly an hour, and all, except poor Hanna, had been drawn into the fray, I felt it full time to strike in, if there was to be any chance of our getting on our journey that day. The secret of the matter was, that they had so loaded their camels with rice, corn, and other provisions for their families, as to have forgotten that they were mine for the time being, in virtue of the hire, and that the baggage was the first thing to be attended to. On such occasions, that sad event, the confusion of tongues, proves a great barrier in the way; and a man looks wondrous foolish setting forth a speech in an unknown tongue to another, who looks his best to understand his gestures, as he can make nothing of his noisy sounds. Conscious of this absurdity, which has often provoked a smile at the expense of some countryman launching English thunders on a French or Italian ear, I yet summoned up as much importance as I could, and calling Shaheen to my aid, I told the Sheikh in Italian (I had not enough Arabic for a good scold), that I perceived with regret, notwithstanding all the commendations bestowed on him, that he was incapable of conducting travellers, as he had not command over his own men, and that, if I had to complain of this again, it should be duly reported to

the British Consulate in Cairo for their guidance in future ; that as I had paid for 7 camels, while only 6 were present. I insisted that every thing belonging to themselves should be instantly taken off the camels, and I would only allow them to take what they could hook on after my things had been first and properly loaded. Shaheen, whose temper—never mild at best—had been sorely chafed during the hour's dispute, entered warmly into my plan, so that the speech lost nothing of its potency by transmission, and resolving to carry it into effect *vi et armis*, pulled out his knife at once for the purpose of ripping up their sacks. The hint, however, was enough—the refractory subject submitted to his chief, and about  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 8 o'clock the last camel was in motion.

Our course for two or three hours was nearly south, and we gradually increased our distance from the sea—the ground over which we travelled being of the same undulating gravelly character as in the Egyptian desert. About half-an-hour after we started, a camel road branched off to the left, towards the Ghebel et Tih, called el Derb Abu Abohamed, from a Sheikh of that name, whose tomb is not far distant. An hour farther on we crossed the Wadi Ghurdiyeh, and, on emerging from it, passed on the right of the path, not more than half-a-dozen feet from us, a shallow grave, in which some son of the Desert had not long before been laid to take his final rest. Though a heap of stones had been raised above him, this had not prevented the jackals from getting at the body, and the human remains, 'all tattered and torn,' were exposed to view. Our Sheikh, Nassar, immediately ordered two of his men to remain with him, whilst the Káfileh moved on, and with a respect for the dead, which it was gratifying to witness, they began to shovel up the sand upon the body with their hands, and to secure it anew with stones. This belongs to the freemasonry of the Desert. They have done for a stranger to-day what some day a stranger's hand may need to do for them. If Nassar's authority was called in question in the morning, there was no hesitation on this occasion to obey. In connection with this, I must not forget to mention that he always carried in his hand a stick, or rod, of the length of a baton. There seemed to be among the company a community of goods, in the few arms they possessed, for they carried them by turns ; but I observed that he never parted with this rod, and, if he wanted to use both hands, he hung it by a leathern thong attached to it to his girdle. Once only, as my camel became unmanageable by its constant stoppages to browse, he gave me his baton to keep it in motion. On inquiry, I was told it was the symbol of his authority as leader and

commander among his troop; and such doubtless was the rod or sceptre which was carried as a badge of authority by the Prince, or Head, of each tribe of Israel in former days, to which reference is made by Jacob in his dying blessing to his sons.

About three hours after leaving Ayn Mousa we branched off from the direct road to Howara, which we had hitherto followed, into a path to the right nearer the sea. My reason for this was a desire to see Ain Suwéirah, visited by Burckhardt on his way from Petra, and to discover, if possible, Ain Nichele, unvisited as yet by any European, but the existence of which had come to Mr Lieder's knowledge through his intercourse with the Arabs. Nassar made objections to this deviation from the beaten route, and wanted to mulct me in an extra half day's pay for the gratification of my curiosity. This I declined to accede to; but having told him that I intended to make stoppages by the way, and would add something extra for the grand *détour* he swore we should have to make, we set out in good humour. There is another well in this neighbourhood called Ain Awad, the water of which is exceedingly bitter. It afterwards turned out that Nassar had mistaken it for Ain Suwéirah, which was almost directly in our route, and on that account had made such opposition to the deviation which he fancied it would involve, though, as the sequel will shew, his own perfect ignorance of the locality may have had something to do with his reluctance.

About mid-day we entered the Wadi Ahtih, in which name Lord Lindsay, I think, first discovered the Arabian Etham in which the Israelites encamped after their passage through the sea. It is of great breadth throughout, widening towards the sea, and differs but very little in level from the flat plain around. There is abundant pasturage for camels and goats among the dwarf shrubs, which grow in great profusion, and in this respect it would have been a suitable place for the encampment of Israel, with their flocks and herds. Query, Did these flocks and herds also pass through the Red Sea, or were they sent forward from the African Etham, by the head of it, into this wilderness? To suppose that the latter was the case does not, in the slightest degree, detract from the glory of the miracle, nor from the truth of the Scripture narrative. In this Wadi we met a caravan of Towerah Arabs going to Cairo, laden with millstones of red granite for sale, from quarries in the neighbourhood of Túr. The usual salutations were given, news from home exchanged with news from Egypt, and in a few minutes the two parties were again far apart. Sending on our baggage, we now turned almost due west towards the sea, in

search of the Ain Suwéirah. Sandhills of considerable height separate the wadi from the sea, and prevent the winter rains from running off rapidly. A considerable deposit of rich alluvial loam is the result, averaging from 2 to 4 inches in thickness, by sowing upon which immediately after the rains the Bedouins would certainly reap a profitable harvest; but they affect to despise all agricultural labour. The ground at length became so soft and slippery, that it was with the greatest difficulty the camels retained their footing. Yet though such spots are to be met with now and then, no one can travel through this waste and dreary region without forming a very decided opinion that it never could have supplied food, by its own natural vegetation, for so great a multitude of flocks and herds as followed in the train of the Israelites. Their support during the forty years' wandering must be attributed to Jehovah's miraculous intervention, not less certainly than the support of their owners. From an expression of the Psalmist in Ps. lxxviii. 7, 9, it appears that this was effected by bounteous supplies of rain covering the wadis along the line of march with deposits of alluvium such as we found in Wadi Althi, thereby enabling them to yield 'grass for the cattle,' and imparting rich luxuriance to the stunted herbs indigenous to the soil! 'O God when Thou wentest forth before Thy people, when Thou didst march through the wilderness, the earth shook, the heavens also dropped at the presence of God.' . . . . 'Thou O God didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance when it was weary.'

Large herds of camels were visible browsing on the succulent foliage, but no trace of human being in the vast solitude. After an hour's vain search for the well, Nassar running fruitlessly from one sandhill to another, we descried an Arab running towards us, and began to shout vigorously to attract his attention. He turned out to be one of our own escort, who had followed us at some distance. Our shouts, however, had been heard by others whom we dreamed not of, for from a sandhill close by two naked savages sprang up as if by magic. One had a small covering in the shape of a shirt, which barely reached from his middle to his knee, but his companion had no other covering than a rag wrapped round his loins, and a little skullcap of white cotton, such as the Turks wear under the fez, upon his head. Both were armed: the more naked savage had a long matchlock hung by a cord round his shoulders. His upper row of teeth projected, rabbit fashion; the expression of his countenance was sinister and cunning, and altogether he was such a customer as one would not like to have dealings with except well armed or under a good escort. Nassar was as much taken

aback as if he had 'summoned spirits from the vasty deep,' and stood for a moment irresolute; a second inspection showed him that they were allies, and forthwith we began to shout anew in chorus, *Ragel taal hénne. Taal hénne Bedoui*—'Man come here, come hither Bedouin,'—an invitation to which they responded by clearing in a few seconds the ground between their sandhill and ours. *Saláms* having been exchanged, and the reason of our visit explained, we learned that the *Ain Awad* for which *Nassar* had been searching, supposing it *Ain Suwéirah*, was a little to the north-west of the place where we had met the caravan in *Wadi Ahthi*. To retrace our steps now, after having lost so much time, was out of the question, especially as I could plead no stronger motive for it than a gratification of my curiosity, as *Ain Awad* is much too near *Ayun Mousa* and even *Suez*, to answer the description of *Marah*, which was three days' march from the place of landing, wherever that might be. Our naked friends we found belonged to the tribe of *Terabein* Arabs, whose territory lies to the north of *Ghebel et Tih*, but who drive their cattle over into this part of the *Towerah* country when pasture fails in their own. They spread along the coast from *Ayun Mousa* down to *Wadi Gherundel*. *Dr Robinson* found them occupying this region when he passed, but *Dr Wilson* saw no trace of them. This is easily accounted for, as their visits to the sea-coast are regulated by the supply of pasture which their own country produces each season for their camels and goats. After making the *Terabein* happy by a small present of tobacco, we set out to overtake the baggage animals, which had been improving the time in grazing a little in advance.

A wide, uninteresting plain stretched away before us, and by way of relieving the monotony of the journey, I suppose, *Shaheen* had his camel led beside mine, and began, uninvited, to give me a sketch of his married life. He led off the conversation by telling me that he had two children; one a boy, who was apprenticed to a pipe-maker in *Cairo*, the other a girl still of tender age. It was his intention, when he returned, to send the latter to *Mr Lieder's* school; he knew that there she would be educated as a Christian, but what could he do? The Egyptian women were ignorant as beasts, they did not know how to manage household affairs, and had nothing to employ themselves with but intrigues. He had seen women educated at the *Missionary Schools*, who could read and write and do accounts; and he was determined that his child should enjoy such advantages. As a matter of course, I strengthened him in this determination by all the arguments I could think of. He then told me he had been thrice married, first



to a girl whom he divorced after having lived with her for a fortnight ; next to a woman whom he loved very much, but who died within the year ; and then to his present wife, who had brought him a good dower, and behaved very well ! I asked him why he had divorced his first wife ? ‘ Because,’ said he, ‘ I had forbidden her to go into the streets except accompanied by myself, or one of my brothers ; but on coming home one day, I found that she had disobeyed me, and so I divorced her at once.’ ‘ Are such divorces common,’ I inquired, ‘ and has your first wife married again ?’ Yes ! his first wife had married another man a few months afterwards, and such divorces were taking place every day. Telling him that the ladies in Europe never wore veils, I asked why the women in the East always did so ? ‘ Ah !’ said he, ‘ the men are so bad in these countries, that we are obliged to veil our women in public, otherwise, those who are good-looking would soon be enticed away from their husbands. A girl, when she is married, brings a dower with her to her husband ; this is laid aside, and in case of separation, is restored to her again, no other ceremony being necessary to complete their divorce. If there is no fruit of the marriage, after the lapse of a month or two, she may marry again ; if she prove to be *enceinte*, the divorcing husband is bound to support her till after the birth of the child, which he takes away and provides for, and she is then free to seek a more suitable match.’ The information thus voluntarily communicated, corroborated statements on the same subject which had been made to me at Cairo. Comment on such a frightful state of society is unnecessary. With divorce as his remedy, the libertine can indulge his brutal passions without fear of punishment ; and woman must have reached the lowest depths of degradation in a land where the holy state of matrimony is converted into a system of legalized seduction.

At 3.15 P.M. we entered Wadi Sadr, which, like Ahthi, is only a few feet lower than the plain, of considerable breadth, and well sprinkled with bushes. Another weary hour on the camel, and at half-past 4 we encamped for the night on the plain between Wadi Sadr and Wadi Wurdán. At the head of the former Wadi there is a mountain called Tas et Sadr, and at the head of the latter, a remarkable table mountain, called Ras et Wurdán, both forming part of the range of Ghebel Tih. In the evening I had the dragoman, Nassar, and a capital little fellow called Saad, who knows this part of the Desert thoroughly, into the tent to hold a council of war about the well Mr Lieder had heard of as existing somewhere near the S.W. point of Ghebel Amarah. Nassar knew absolutely nothing of it ; and it turned out

that he was about to lead me on the morrow to Ain Howára; but after much explanation and cogitation, Saad at last remembered having visited Ain Nichele, a well near the sea shore before reaching Wadi Gherundel, the water of which, he said, was so bitter that even the camels would not touch it. As this seemed to tally exactly with the place I wished to visit, the palaver was broken up, with orders to be ready in the morning to set out for Ain Suwéirah, and from thence to Ain Nichele. I sat down, as usual, to write out the day's proceedings in my journal; and by degrees deep sleep appeared to have dropped on all the party but myself, when I was startled by the voice of some one engaged in prayer at a little distance from the tent. I had heard it for the first time the night before, at Ayun Mousa, without being able to distinguish whether the orison was Mohammedan or Christian; but on looking out, I saw, by the light of the moon, the poor Abyssinian cook, Hanna, standing with clasped hands, looking up to heaven, and uttering his prayers in a strange tongue indeed, but through that one only Mediator in whom all believers become one. It was a touching sight; and humble and ignorant though he was—a member, too, of a fallen church, which has sadly corrupted the truth—I felt, in the midst of the blind votaries of the false prophet, knit to him by the bonds of brotherhood. During the forenoon, I had observed him reading a book, which, on inquiry, turned out to be an Ethiopic Psalter; but as I was a stranger to his beloved *Ettiopé*, our intercourse was more by signs than otherwise. I found out that he had been in Mr Lieder's school, at Cairo, and had learned to read there; but as Shaheen is a Mohammedan, and frequent quarrels arose between them about their religions, I restrained my curiosity about his past history till we should meet with some Christian interpreter. Poor fellow, how my heart yearned to be able to communicate some spiritual instruction to him!

*January 21st.*—We started on foot about a quarter before 8 o'clock from our last night's bivouac, for the Ain Abu Suwéirah, Saad being our guide, and the camels following. There must have been heavy rain in this quarter not long before, for the plain was so slippery that the men had to lead the camels with great precaution, their great clumsy feet being quite unmanageable in the mud; and, notwithstanding all care, one of them was overturned, to the detriment of his load and the loss of our time, though fortunately the animal escaped scathless. Our course was S.S.E., and, after a walk of two hours, we entered the Wadi Wurdan, in which the Ain Suwéirah is situated. Taking his mark from a tarfa tree, growing on the bank of the Wadi, Saad soon

found out a hole, under the bank, about five feet in length, by a foot and a-half in depth, the bottom of which was covered by a thick coating of mud, now hardening in the sun. *La La! Mafèesh Ain*—‘This is no well’—was my first hasty exclamation to the grinning Saad; but on walking a little further down the course of the wadi, we found some water in the dry bed of the torrent, which evidently came from a spring. It was sweet to the taste; and on scraping up the sand with the hand, or with a stick, it came up pretty freely. Further down still we found a considerable quantity of water, brackish to the taste, but still quite fit for use on emergency. While endeavouring to get to the edge of this pool, the ground gave way, and I sank up to the knees in sand, mud, and water.

We might now have struck inland to join the road we left yesterday; but as Ain Nichele is in the broad plain over which we were travelling, we continued our course to the S.E. About 11.30, we came upon a small encampment of the Terabein, consisting of 8 tents. One was close to our path, affording an opportunity of near inspection. It was black—woven of goat’s-hair—open in front—very low, and a curtain of the same material separated the Haréem from the outer apartments. Its inmates were a woman and a child, apparently about six years old, naked as when born. The other tents were a few hundred yards to the right of our path, and we passed on without visiting them; but presently we saw a man running towards us, who turned out to be the Sheikh of one of the principal clans of the Terabein. As in the patriarchal times, a man’s wealth in the Desert is still estimated by the extent of his flocks and camels; and this old gentleman, we were told by some of his followers, was the owner of 100 camels, and of a very large flock of goats. He was a man apparently about 60, with a long grisly beard, but still full of vigour, and with an eye undimmed by age. Over his dirty shirt he wore a white bernousa, and a rich silk scarf was wrapped as a turban round his taboosh. He wore a sword by his side, and a pistol stuck in his girdle, and was altogether the most *distingué* in appearance of any son of the Desert I had yet seen. We exchanged saláms, and passed on, leaving our Sheikh to communicate all news. We had not proceeded more than half a mile when we came upon his flock of goats, guarded by two men nearly as destitute of clothing as our friend of the day before, but both well armed. We tried to purchase a goat from them, but were informed that the flock was the private property of the Sheikh, and that they dared not dispose of one without his permission.

At one o’clock we were opposite to the Wadi Amarah, in which the

Ain Howára (Marah) is situated, about 3 hours distant to the left. Crossing Wadi Shíshah, our way lay over an unbroken plain, having on the left Ghebel Amarah, which seems a spur of the Tih mountains rather than one of the range, and a low ridge of limestone hills between us and it. At 2 o'clock we perceived before us a group of a dozen small palm-trees half-a-mile from the shore, and made sure, from its correspondence with Mr Lieder's description, that Ain Nichele must be there. We were not mistaken. On getting near we found Saad, who had gone before us, half buried in the sand, digging up something. This turned out to be the well itself, which had been choked up with sand, and at first presented no sign of water. It had a circumference of three feet, and nearly the same depth; and, after scraping out the sand with a tin pan to the depth of 12 inches, the water began to spring up, and Shaheen and I were able to taste it. Our Arabs tried to dissuade us by making grimaces, strongly indicative of disgust, and crying out *Márah, Márah*—'bitter, bitter.' They were right: it was exceedingly nauseous, for it had at once a bitter and sulphureous flavour, and a most offensive smell, similar to that of the Harrogate waters. I brought away a bottle of this water for analysis;<sup>1</sup> it was afterwards accidentally broken at Beyrout, and a small portion of the water spilled, the odour of which was so offensive that I was obliged to evacuate my room for some hours, till it disappeared. I believe I am the first European who has visited this well, and shall, therefore, put down its bearings, as I took them on the spot. It lies at the south western extremity of the low range of hills, which are a continuation of Ghebel Amarah, and about ten minutes walk from the sea, at the point where Ras Lejiyah<sup>2</sup> projects into it. The most southern part of the Abou Deraj, on the opposite coast, bears due W., and Ain Howára E.N.E., at about nine hours' distance, according to our Arabs, but, as their notions of time are

<sup>1</sup> The following is the result of the analysis conducted by Professor Gregory of Edinburgh:—Specific gravity at 60° Fahrenheit, 1008.5.

Amount of solid matter in the gallon, 1400 grains, consisting of—

Chloride of sodium or common salt, . . . . .	40.725
Sulphate of lime or gypsum, . . . . .	12.520
Sulphate of magnesia or epsom salts, . . . . .	40.715
Chloride of magnesium, . . . . .	6.040

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100.000

<sup>2</sup> It may be remembered that it is at this point Captain Moresby supposes the Israelites to have stepped on the Arabian shore from Ras Zafaraneh opposite.

extremely imperfect. I should suppose three much nearer the mark. May not this Well be the Marah of Scripture?—Exod. xv. 23. From the excessive nauseousness of the water, it seems more probably so than Ain Howara, which, according to the accounts of many travellers, confirmed by our Bedouins, is drinkable at a pinch, whereas a man must be at the last extremity before he could ever bring himself to swallow this detestable compound. It is in the vicinity of Ghebel Amarah, though on the opposite side of it from Ain Howara. It is true that, except the palm-trees, there are no shrubs growing immediately around it, with the branches of which its waters could be miraculously sweetened; but that is no serious objection, as the existence of the palms proves the soil capable of vegetation, and the solitary place of to-day may have been a forest 3000 years ago. Viewing the two routes from Wadi Ahtli, the place of separation, it seems much more likely, humanly speaking, that the Israelites would march along the broad plain beside the sea, where there is so much herbage for the cattle, to the mouth of Wadi Gherundel, than pursue the path further inland, which would lead them among hills and deep embedded wadis, and narrow passes. It took us 14 hours of actual travelling, exclusive of the detour to Ain Awad, to go from Ayun Mousa to Ain Nichele, which, reckoned at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles per hour, gives 35 miles as the entire distance; and this would give nearly 12 miles a-day as the average journey of the host of Israel, for the three days in the Desert—a march quite long enough if their encumbered state is taken into account. The well of Nichele not only thus corresponds in point of time and distance, with the Scripture narrative, supposing Ayun Mousa to have been the place where the Israelites crossed, but it is situated exactly one day's march of  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Wadi Gherundel, usually believed to be the Elim of Scripture (Exod. xv. 27) where they next encamped.

After half an hour spent in examining this locality, we set out again, being most anxious to reach the head of Wadi Gherundel ere we halted for the night, in order to spend a quiet Sabbath there. Our course still lay along the sea-shore, and for five hours we journeyed on over a wide plain, traversed only by one deep Wadi, the name of which I could not learn. Darkness came on before we reached our destination, and the fatigue consequent on eleven hours' uninterrupted travel made the route seem interminable; but at length the splash of water was heard under the camel's feet, and on emerging I found it was the stream which runs from Wadi Gherundel to the sea. It was past seven before we reached it, and never did weary son of labour exult more

heartily in the prospect of his Sabbath's rest than I did that night, after six days of torturing motion on a camel's back. If the advocates of Sabbath excursions and amusements were put through the ordeal of camel-travelling in the Desert for a month or two, they would become convinced that, apart from the religious question altogether, the physical rest which our Gracious Creator enjoined on one day in seven is indispensable, as a compensation for the wear and tear of bodily strength consumed in labour; that without it the human machine must soon be worn out; and that consequently they are the workman's worst enemies who would urge him, jaded with a week of labour, to further fatigue and fresh excitement on the Sabbath. All day long I had been keeping a constant look-out to seaward for the Indian steamers, in one of which Maitland had embarked, and continued it at intervals till midnight, but could discover no other lights than those of the starry firmament.

*January 22.*—After breakfast I walked up the Wadi Gherundel alone, with my Bible as my companion. A stream about 12 feet in breadth runs down from the spring, which the Arabs told me was six hours higher up,<sup>1</sup> and though only a few inches deep. I am informed it never fails the whole year round. This wadi is by far the most fertile we have come to since leaving the Nile, if such an expression can be applied where not a blade of grass is to be found. A number of palm trees and thickets of tarfas, which really deserve the name of trees, grow in it, besides the shrubs to be met with in all the wadis of the Desert, among which is the *Ghurkudda*, a plant bearing berries of an acid taste, which some have thoughtlessly suggested might have been used by Moses for sweetening the waters of Marah, and the *Rahbol*, of which the camel is particularly fond. This wadi is of great length, forming an opening in the range of Ghebel et Tih, and taking its rise, as I afterwards found, close to the summit of Nakb el Rahkiney, one of the passes leading to Nukhl. If the Israelites marched along the sea-shore they would naturally turn up this fertile valley towards the well, as their progress southward after a few miles would be stopped by the Ghebel Hummam Faraoun, between which and the sea it is impossible to pass. I learned from a friend who visited the spring a month or two after I had passed this way, that water in

<sup>1</sup> How small is the dependence to be put on the Arabs' estimate of time may be gathered from the fact that Bartlett mentions it only took him one hour from the fountain to the mouth of the wadi.—*Forty Days in the Desert*, p. 34. Had I known this at the time I could have visited it with the utmost ease, as I was only two miles from it at most.

abundance may be found in it, as in the Wadi Useit, by scraping up the sand to the depth of a foot or two. There is only one palm tree beside the fountain, but there are many to be found scattered up and down the valley. This Wadi is generally supposed to be the Elim of Scripture, but Dr Wilson prefers the Wadi Useit, as being farther from Ain Howára. Provided the Israelites marched by the plain near the sea-shore, there could be no objection on the score of distance between Ain Nichele and the spring in this Wadi; but as those of Wadi Useit are only 5 or 6 miles distant from it. I am much inclined to believe that Elim, with its twelve wells, includes both valleys, and that the hosts of Israel, who had not yet any regular order of encampment, were scattered around where the most ample supplies of food and water could be found for their cattle. I am the more disposed to adopt this opinion from the consideration that the Israelites, instead of halting for a single night, probably passed some weeks in this oasis, as it deserves fully to be called. The mouth of this valley is evidently a place much frequented by Bedouins. On the northern headland there is a grave-yard, the first I had seen; and around my tent there were traces of many encampments, and a huge cliff beside it, hollowed out like an alcove, was black with the smoke of their camp-fires. It lies within the beat of the Aleikat sept of the Towerah, to which Aleiwa, the *buffo* of our company, belongs.

I spent the forenoon most pleasantly, reading in my tent. In the afternoon I resolved to walk to the hot springs called *Hummam Faraoun*, 'Pharaoh's Baths,' which issue from the base of the lofty mountain of the same name, about 6 miles to the south of Wadi Gherundel, and are seldom visited by European travellers. Taking Aleiwa with me in case of meeting any of his tribe, armed with sword, matchlock, and *zimzimieh*, we reached the mouth of Wadi Useit in exactly an hour from the time of leaving our tents, and in half an hour more we arrived at the springs. It was a fatiguing walk, owing to the intense heat, and the depth of the soft sand through which we had to wade. Ghebel Hummam Faraoun at first sight seems entirely composed of chalky limestone; but after rounding its northern headland the chalk formation is seen to be upheaved by trap or porphyritic rock, which forms the base of the mountain towards the sea, and it is from the fissures in these rocks that the hot sulphureo-saline waters issue forth. They burst out in 12 separate streams, besides bubbling up through the sand; but, though only 30 feet distant from the sea, instead of each running directly into it by a chanel of its own, they all unite in one considerable stream, which runs parallel to the

sea for nearly a quarter of a mile, and then falls into it. One of these springs is of much greater force than the rest, and sends out a copious stream of boiling water. It is both sulphureous and saline in taste; it leaves a sulphureous deposit on the rocks and stones in its course, while the sand round about it is incrustated with salt. I put my finger into the stream, but withdrew it with prodigious haste, as it was literally scalding. I then plunged in my small thermometer to ascertain the exact heat, the outward air being at the time  $75^{\circ}$  Fahr.; but to this moment I have no idea what it was, for in an instant the mercury rose to  $120^{\circ}$  F., as high indeed as the column in the tube could rise, and before I could withdraw it the glass burst with a report like a pistol.<sup>1</sup> This was a great misfortune, as, not having bethought me of the probability of such accidents, I had neglected to provide myself with another thermometer before leaving Cairo.

After ten days in the Desert, during which we had made acquaintance with vermin on the one hand, and the minimum quantity of water possible for ablutions on the other, I resolved to enjoy the luxury of a hot bath. The attempt, though made at some distance from the spring, was as complete a failure as that with the thermometer had been; I scalded my foot badly, and, with a howl of pain, dashed into the sea. The temperature near the surface, judging by the feeling, was pretty nearly the same as in our northern latitudes during summer, when a good breeze of wind is astir. Remarking, however, bubbles of fixed air rising rapidly to the surface, I suspected that the hot springs might issue from the bottom, as they did from the sand on the shore, and by putting my feet to the ground I found this to be the case; the temperature of the water near the bottom being much higher than towards the surface. After dressing, I walked along the bank of the boiling stream to its embouchure. The mountain ascends gradually to some height, ere it assumes the precipitous shape that distinguishes Ghebel Hummam at a distance. About 30 feet above the level of the springs are two small grottoes in the rock, from which issued a sulphureous smell and stifling heat, reminding me of Nero's baths in the vicinity of Baiae. There is a platform of a few feet within the entrance of these caves, beyond which they descend almost perpendicularly into the interior of the mountain.

I found numerous inscriptions in Arabic, written with ink, but only the letters R. I. in Roman characters: a good proof that few travellers

<sup>1</sup> Rüssegger states the temperature at  $55.7^{\circ}$  Réaun., which is equal to  $160^{\circ}$  Fahr.



turn aside to visit this natural curiosity. It is well worth a visit, however; and I should recommend any who feel so inclined, if they take the path by Ain Howára, to come down Wadi Gherundel to this spot, and then ascend Wadi Useit from the shore. This will not take up more than half a day, and the ground travelled over is interesting throughout. The heat in the caverns was so great, it was impossible to remain in them many seconds. Nothing in the shape of a vapour bath could be more effective; and such is the use to which they are turned both by the Bedouins and some of the natives of Suez. Aleiwa made me understand by words and signs that people who have received wounds, or are labouring under diseases of the skin, come here to bathe, which Nassar on my return confirmed. It appears that they give the title *Sheikh* to these springs, and attribute to them, on account of their heat, a sacred character, as the gift of Allah. When a chief or rich man belonging to one of the tribes goes there to bathe, he makes a vow to sacrifice a sheep or young camel, and he and his family have a grand feast. If my memory serves me right, I think Laborde speaks of many caverns here; this is a mistake, for there are only two, the largest not capable of affording accommodation for more than half a dozen persons, ere it runs down at a steep angle into the interior of the mountain. The stones I threw down rattled away to a great distance; but as we had brought no lights, I did not attempt to explore their depths. I brought away with me a bottle of water from the springs for the purpose of analysis.<sup>1</sup> A bay of the sea near Ghebel Hummam Faraoun, famous for its storms, is called Birket Faraoun, 'the Pool of Pharaoh;' and the Arabs have a tradition that the spirits of the submerged host hover constantly about it.<sup>2</sup> On my return, I had an opportunity of observing the admirable provision made by the all-wise Creator for the preservation of the shrubs which grow in this parched land. Some of them, not above

<sup>1</sup> The result of Professor Gregory's analysis is as follows:—Specific gravity at 60° Fahrenheit, 1007.9.

Amount of solid matter in the gallon 1211 grains, consisting of—	
Chloride of sodium,	73.215
Sulphate of lime,	6.720
Sulphate of magnesia,	20.065
	100.000

<sup>2</sup> When relating this tradition, the Arabs mentioned to Shaheen the existence in the Egyptian desert, not very far from the path we had travelled, of a mountain called 'The mountain where Pharaoh made war with God.' It was provoking to hear this for the first time when we had lost the opportunity of verifying it.

three feet in height, had stretched out their fibrous roots nine and even twelve feet along the ground, in order the better to suck up the scanty moisture which sustains them. His care for the beasts of the Desert is not less remarkably developed by the fact that the leaves of almost every herb and shrub which grows in it are thick and succulent, and afford moisture to the palate as well as nourishment. 'O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all.' We got back to the tents at 3.30, and I spent the rest of the day both profitably and pleasantly. Towards night, Nassar came to make an humble request for a little brandy, as he was suffering severely from toothache. Though astonished at such a request from a Mohammedan, I gave it him; but soon found the toothache was merely a 'dodge' to get the brandy, as he gulped it down at once, testified his approbation of it by a very emphatic *Taieb Kateir, Taieb Kateir!* (very good, very good!) and declared it had cured him by the inward warmth it produced!

*January 23.*—Early this morning, Shaheen came to say that Aleiwa, who knew these parts well, had told him there were many gazelles on the hills around, and that if the howajee would give him a little powder, we should have one for dinner in a day or two. On the faith of such an addition to our larder, the powder was readily given, and for a day or two I believed in the good faith of the proposal; but if it really was made in good faith, the temptation to appropriate the powder was too strong for the rogue to resist, and I remained minus both it and the game. As the tents of his family are not far distant from Wadi Useit, in the Wadi Ramlieh, he asked to be allowed to visit them, and promised to rejoin us at Sinai; but as neither the Sheikh nor Shaheen could spare him, his request was refused. We left Wadi Gherundel at 8 o'clock, and following the course we had taken yesterday along the shore, entered Wadi Salmineh at 9 o'clock, then crossed over a narrow ridge of chalk, which separated it from Wadi Useit, and ascended the latter till we came to the wells, leaving the baggage camels in the former Wadi, because it is easier of ascent, and eventually merges in Wadi Useit. I was anxious to ascertain whether the Israelites, on the supposition of their having marched along the sea-shore, could have made the circuit of Ghebel Hummam by this Wadi, and the conclusion was soon arrived at, that by whatsoever path they travelled, it could not have been by this, because it is so narrow. During the two hours and a half which were occupied in ascending it from the shore to the wells, there is not a point between the perpendicular walls of this ravine where 20 men could walk

abreast. It is as picturesque as it is magnificent. The rocks of pure white chalk laid in strata one above another, as regularly as stones on a building, rise from the bed of the torrent on either side to the height of from 50 to 300 feet. The torrent bed is of the same chalky material. Not a single shrub grows in it throughout its whole extent; but from the clefts of the rock above, the *Leisúf*, or caper plant, covered with white blossoms, hung down in graceful bouquets, and also another plant, with a bright green leaf, called by the Arabs, *Lastúf*, which I have never met with elsewhere. It grows very plentifully here, and bears a fruit of a crimson colour resembling a pear in shape and size, pungent like pepper to the taste, and leaving behind it a savour which, however contradictory it may seem, is both acid and sweet. There was plenty of the fruit in its green state, but I only got two specimens in full maturity.

About an hour and a half from the entrance of the wadi, Saad announced that water was to be found in a narrow ravine to the right, running apparently into the eastern face of Ghebel Hummam, and away he scampered with the *zimzimiehs* in search of it, with shouts of '*Moie Taieb*,' which the echoes multiplied in a wonderful manner. As I was walking at the time, I gave chase, and after some difficult climbing, came, in ten minutes, to a natural basin in the rock, 20 feet deep, formed in the course of ages by the fall of the winter torrent from the rock above. There had been little rain that season, and we found no water; but Saad said that in spring the Arabs always come here, preferring the rain water lodged in this basin to that of the wells, because it is perfectly sweet. The strata of white limestone in this ravine are even more remarkable than in the wadi, having quite the appearance of a street built with hewn stones of Cyclopean dimensions, laid one upon another with all the exactitude of masonic art. In another hour we reached the upper part of Wadi Useit, where Wadi Salmineh takes its rise, and at 11.30 halted beside the wells of Useit till the baggage camels should overtake us, which they did about five minutes after our arrival. There were four wells open, each being a small hole dug in the bed of the dry torrent, one foot and a half in diameter, and about the same in depth. There were not more than two inches of water in any of them when we arrived; but as our Arabs required to fill their water-skins, they scraped out the sand, and more water soon came. It was a little brackish to the taste, but I have drunk worse water in a more fruitful land. I am told that any number of wells may be dug in the gravel here, and water will be found. There are 14 wild palms in the neighbourhood of the wells, and two

more about a quarter of a mile distant. While the skins were being filled, I cut a branch from one of the palm trees, for a memorial of Elim; but through the carelessness of the Bedouins, it was afterwards lost.

We were soon again in motion, and at half-past 12 bade adieu to Wadi Useit, which runs now in an easterly direction towards the mountains on the left. Our way led over an irregular expanse of country, broken by ridges of gravel, from one of which we caught our first sight of Ghebel Serbal, towering as majestically over a forest of intervening mountains as the son of Kish did over the thousands of Israel in olden times. At this distance, the summit appeared as flat as a table. Serbout el Ghamel, 'the Camel's Saddle Mountain,' lay before us more to the eastward; a little nearer in the same direction was a conical mountain of reddish hue, called Ghebel Monsékhar, and Ghebel Thal seemed immediately below us to the S.E. On the right hand were the dark masses of Ghebel Hummam; and on the left, the white limestone range of Ghebel Tih, stretching far away to the east. From this point the traveller has his introduction to the labyrinth of mountains through which he has to thread his way in the southern part of the peninsula. At this place we met a kafileh of Um Zieneh Bedouins going to burn charcoal in Wadi Gherundel for the Cairo market. They had not passed more than half an hour, when we met a much larger caravan near the entrance of Wadi Thal, composed of equestrians, with the usual complement of Bedouin drivers. Our men at first took them for soldiers returning from Tûr; but on coming up, they turned out to be tradesmen of various nations and handicrafts, who had been employed at the new palace which the Pasha was building near Tûr, and were now returning to Cairo. Amidst them rode one of the monks of Mount Sinai, carrying on one side of his saddle a large hamper of oranges for his refreshment, and on the other, his wallet with provisions;—a man of portly bearing, not differing much in appearance from his brethren of the same race in Italy, saving that instead of a hood, he had his head protected by a round cap of sheepskin, similar to that worn by the Circassians and other inhabitants of the Caucasus. We stopped for a moment, exchanged salâms on either side, and then passed on. This mode of salutation is as old as the days of Moses. It was exactly thus that, a little farther on in this Desert, when Jethro brought Moses' wife and children to join the camp, the priest of Midian and the leader of Israel accosted one another—'Moses went out to meet his father-in-law, and they asked each other of their welfare.'

In Wadi Thal, which girds Ghebel Hummam on the south, as Wadi Useit does on the north, we saw for the first time since leaving Cairo some Sant trees, called more usually Sayal by the Bedouins—the *Acacia Arabica*, from which gum Arabic is extracted. On the high ground between it and the Wadi Humor we passed a heap of stones by the way side, called Oreis el Themman, ‘the Grave of the Bride of Themman;’ but with the exception of a small bit of rag hanging on a reed against the bank, no votive offerings adorned it. The Arabs, as they passed, uttered some words I could not catch—the import of which, Shaheen told me, was ‘Lie still, Lie still.’

In the Wadi el Humor, the upper and the lower roads to Sinai diverge. The former, leading up Wadi Humor to Wadi Ramlich, and Ghebel Serabit el Khadem, is the shortest, and runs to the left; the other, which passes Wadi Mokatteb and Wadi Feiran, turning to the right, enters at this point Wadi Teiybeh, and this we followed. This wadi resembles in its bold appearance the one through which we passed in the morning, with this difference, that, while on the one side the chalky stratification continues, on the other the sandstone region begins, which intervenes between the limestone and the granite of the Sinai group. It is very tortuous in its course; and, notwithstanding its absolute barrenness, very beautiful. About 4 o’clock we came to a group of palm trees, growing in the centre of this wadi, fully more numerous than that we left behind in Wadi Useit; and as they are sure indicators of water in the Desert, I was not surprised to learn we had reached Ain Teiybeh. Its waters are not sweeter than those of Wadi Useit. Under the shade of these palms the caravan which we had last met had halted the previous night. Nassar wished to encamp here also, but I was anxious to do so by the sea, which I knew could not be far distant. This he declared was impossible, as the sea was still more than two hours distant, so, after urging them on for another quarter of an hour, I was obliged reluctantly to give in.

A seed-loaf, which the English baker at Cairo had put up along with my biscuits, was discovered this evening in the canteen quite stale and hard. I had it cut in two, and divided between the servants and the Bedouins, making a little feast for the latter. Their delight was perfectly childish; they woke the echoes in the neighbouring rocks with their shouts of ‘*Kateir herug Howajee!*’ and, after a while, they sent to say that they were going to perform the Arab dance, with which they seem to wind up all their rejoicings. I was glad of the opportunity, as I had missed seeing it at Suez, when performed in

honour of the feast Maitland had given them. Europeans attach the idea of a movement of the feet to the word dance, but not so the Bedouins. They stood close, side by side, supporting one another, and began to sing a monotonous and nasal ditty, clapping their hands by way of accompaniment and to mark the time. While so engaged, they bent their bodies backward and forward, then from side to side, after the fashion of the dervishes; then up and down, crouching one moment as if about to sit on their heels, and the next standing perfectly erect; but the feet were never moved from their original position during the whole of the performance. At first the words of the song were those they chaunt at their marriage feasts in praise of the bride, in which, judging from the phrases Shaheen translated, the usual amount of Eastern hyperbole was not wanting; the words were then changed into an eloge upon the qualities and excellencies of their camels; and, finally, Saad, who is a wit, struck out in an extempore effusion in praise of the Howajee, of themselves, and of the feast they had had, the whole ending with an augury of a prosperous journey! After having danced in this fashion for about ten minutes they bade me good night, wrapped themselves up in their bernouses, and in a very short time were sound asleep between their camels and the watch fire.

*January 24th.*—This morning, at half-past seven, we resumed our journey down the Wadi Teiybeh, and walking on alone. I found myself in exactly half-an-hour emerging from it on the plain by the sea shore. Nassar looked a little foolish when I called to his memory his protestations of last night regarding the distance; but his excuse was, that there were shrubs in abundance for the camels where we halted, and none here. Lepsius proposes this as the position of Elin, though few probably will reckon his reasons sufficiently strong to justify the change. The mountain on the left of the mouth of the wadi, in descending towards the sea, is not only remarkable for its shape, but also for its formation, as a dyke of porphyritic rock of immense thickness cuts the sandstone mountain in two, and presents to the eye a dark black belt, contrasting most strangely with the bright red colour of the sandstone. In the latter I found fossil shells, apparently oysters and clams; but, being unprovided with the proper instruments, all my efforts to get them out of the rock failed. Supposing Wadi Gherundel or Wadi Useit to be the Elin of Scripture, the Israelites must have come by this way, because their next encampment after leaving Elin was ‘by the Red Sea;’ and from the barrier which Ghebel Hummam Faraoun interposes to a passage along the coast, the mind

rests with peculiar satisfaction on the narrow plain, close to the sea, at the mouth of Wadi Teiyibeh, as the only spot yet known along the whole route of the Israelites to Kadesh Barnea, where conjecture as to their halting place yields to certainty. There cannot be a doubt that this is the place referred to in Scripture, where it is said, 'They removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red Sea.'—Num. xxxiii. 10. From the mouth of the wadi, half-an-hour's ride across a plain of semicircular form, caused by the retrogression of the mountains, brought us to the Ras Abu Selimah, beside which is the tomb, now in ruins, of a Sheikh of the same name. The shed which covered it has fallen, and one or two upright posts are all that remain to mark the spot. Our Arabs took no notice of it, and offered up no prayers in passing. In crossing the plain the most noticeable object is a huge chalk mountain on the left, in form like a truncated pyramid built in tiers; the front of each tier being deeply but regularly furrowed by the torrents descending from the summit.

To the right we had that part of the sea called Birket Faraoun, which has a bad character for storms, occasioned, as already stated, according to the Arabs, by the spirits of the drowned still hovering about it, and which certainly proves fatal to many of the native vessels navigating these waters. Shaheen assured me that a Turkish steam frigate, with all on board, was lost here about a dozen years ago, while he was in the service of the British vice-consul at Suez. A small Arab vessel, which we had observed working its way up from the south, had not courage to face the Birket, as a fresh breeze was coming on, and cast anchor under the lee of Ras Hagar Ráchah just as we passed. On the African coast, Ghebel Zaffaraneh, 'the Mountain of Saffron,' was opposite us; and further south we saw Ghebel Gharib, 'the Mountain of the Camel's Hump,' which bounded the view in that direction. As we approached Ras Abu Selimah, the Arabs took up sand from the shore and rubbed the nostrils and ears of the camels with it, and also any sores upon their bodies within reach—an operation I had previously observed them perform when we first reached the shore on the opposite side near Wadi Tawarik. The explanation they gave of this singular unction was, that it was to prevent sickness at the Red Sea. They have the notion, whether correctly or not I cannot say, that the air of the sea causes sores on the camels to swell and mortify, and that sand or oil put into their nostrils is a preventive. I was wakened in the morning by a dreadful roaring of the camels, occasioned by their nostrils and sores being smeared with oil, which their masters had begged from Shaheen for

the purpose. The Rev. Mr Fisk is the only traveller in whose book I have seen any notice taken of this singular custom.

Nearly an hour after we had passed Ras Abu Selimah, we came to a remarkable headland called Hagar Rachah, formed by a spur of the hills running down into the sea. The rock itself (Hagar) forms the promontory; and a narrow opening, which one could almost believe to have been artificially cut, allows a passage between it and the hill. At this point, through an opening, we first caught sight of Ghebel el Banat, 'the Mountain of the Damsels,' consisting, as we afterwards found, of two peaks, from which an Arab legend says that two daughters of a Sheikh, at some remote period, precipitated themselves, bound together by their locks, into the wadi below. At this distance it had all the appearance of a gigantic pyramid. After passing through the narrow passage at Hagar Rachah, the limestone strata presented the appearance of a broad flight of stairs, up one side of which the camels clambered awkwardly enough, but without any danger to their riders; a regard for our necks, however, rendered it prudent to dismount before they attempted to descend on the other side. This barrier surmounted, we came down to the sea-shore, along which our route lay for more than a quarter of a mile, the precipitous cliffs preventing all passage on the land side. Luckily for us, it was low water, and there was sufficient room to pass between the rocks and the sea; but at full tide the water rises so high against the rocks, as to prevent all passage. This ride along the shore brought us into another narrow plain, formed by the retiring hills, called Wadi Michol, which was bounded, at the distance of a quarter of a mile, by another rocky barrier as narrow as the former, after surmounting which we came out at eleven o'clock on an immense plain called Wadi Murcháh, 'the Valley of Rest,' in which the Israelites, no doubt, made another halt, as it must have taken a considerable time to conduct two millions of living souls, besides cattle, along the route just described, which, twice in every twenty-four hours, is rendered impassable by the tide, and along which, even at low water, not more than twenty men could march abreast. This plain must be a part of the wilderness of Sin, which the Israelites reached exactly one month after they left Rameses. It is shut in to the south by a double range of hills, called Ghebel Muzázad, and Ghebel Feiran, the latter being the boundary of Wadi Feiran, which, with its continuation Wadi es Sheikh, runs, in a semi-circular direction from the sea, all the way to Ghebel Mousa and the convent of St Catherine. It was in this place that the first flight of quails visited the camp, the supply of provisions brought out of Egypt



having been completely exhausted; and here also they tasted, for the first time, 'that bread from heaven,' which, for forty years, Jehovah rained, morning by morning, the Sabbath only excepted, around their camp.

As I was anxious to see the curious inscriptions in Wadi Mokatteb, we struck diagonally across Wadi Murcháh in an easterly direction, instead of following the sea shore to the entrance of Wadi Feiran. I was unable at the time to get any information about the distance between Wadi Mokatteb and the point where the path leading through it falls into the Wadi Feiran, otherwise I would have preferred traversing Wadi Murcháh southwards, and tracing Wadi Feiran from its embouchure, through its entire length—making a short detour from it for the purpose of visiting Wadi Mokatteb and Wadi Makhara—as it is not improbable that by it the Israelites entered the heart of the peninsula, and that in it must be sought the stations of Dophkah and Alush, between the encampment by the sea and Rephidim. Having since ascertained by personal observation that the time occupied in riding between that part of Wadi Mokatteb, where the Sinaitic inscriptions are found, and the point where the path falls into Wadi Feiran, is exactly *two hours*, I hope that some future traveller may be induced to explore the lower part of Wadi Feiran, the localities of which I believe have never yet been visited, or at least described. This can be done without sacrificing a sight of 'the Written Valleys,' for, by leaving the tents at the point indicated above, one day would amply suffice to visit them both and to return in the evening.

From the sea shore, where we entered Wadi Murcháh to the entrance of Wadi Legám, we had a disagreeable ride in the midst of heavy rain, which soaked both bedding and habiliments. This wadi has a larger share of vegetation than usual. I especially remarked the number of Sant trees in this and the two next wadis. It has been already mentioned that from these trees gum Arabic is extracted; but the quantity taken from the peninsula to the Cairo market is very small, because the Arabs will not take the trouble of extracting it properly. In Upper Egypt, whence the largest supplies come, the mode of extraction is by an incision made in the bark of the tree; but here I observed with astonishment a heap of dead branches round each tree, and, on asking the reason, was told that the Arabs prune the branches every year, and allow the gum to drop from the wounds, thus wasting the gum and weakening the tree. At the foot of the hills which bound this

plain to the north, Nassar pointed out, at a distance, a palm-tree beside a spring, called Ain Murchah; and in the same direction, only a little further east, there is the opening of Wadi Dháferi, among the rocks of which also the Arabs find water. Passing through Wadi Legam, we entered Wadi Shelál at 2.20, where there is a spring of good water, from which our Arabs filled their water skins; and, at 3 o'clock we entered the remarkable pass called Nakb el Budrah, which, to my eye, had all the appearance of an extinct volcano. The various strata of rocks are here commingled in such wild confusion, that it would require the powers of description of Sir Charles Lyell, or Hugh Miller, to do them justice. There are also curious mammillary hills of greyish mud, exactly resembling in shape and size those which are seen in extraordinary abundance in the neighbourhood of Volterra, in Tuscany. The most remarkable feature, however, was the red sandstone, traversed horizontally by narrow streaks of black, white, purple, and grey, like the hull of a ship gaily painted, enabling one to realize in a moment the appearance of the oft-described variegated sandstone of the Valley of Petra. The ground was thickly strewn with chips of dark red stone, which I took to be clay indurated by volcanic fire, and which in many places was incrustated with salt. It took half an hour to get across the bottom of this crater, at the eastern side of which there was a most abrupt ascent, up which the camels toiled with very great difficulty. This, I believe, is, properly speaking, the Nakb or pass, though the route on the other side for some distance also bears the name of Nakb el Budrah.

The rocks around us, as we began to descend towards the Wadi Sidreh, were all of red sandstone, with thick layers of blue argillaceous earth between, in which I found some very fine specimens of fossil *echini*. At the head of this wadi, while looking after these fossil remains, I came suddenly on a rock by the way side, which some 'prentice hand had appropriated as his copybook 'long, long ago,' and on which, with pen of iron, he had traced the cudgels, whips, and pot-hooks of his alphabet, in form so uncouth and mysterious, that, 'large text' though it be, any attempts up to this time to 'read it off' have ended in failure. This was the first specimen I met with of the far-famed rock writings of the Sinaitic peninsula, which, after those of Nineveh Babylon and Egypt have, to a greater or less extent, yielded up their long-forgotten secrets to the philological Paul Prys of the present day, still remain faithful to their unknown authors, and refuse to satisfy our curiosity, whether they were by race Amalekites or Hebrews—whether they were wild Bedouin shepherds, feeding their flocks among these

mountains, or dotard monks, importing into the peninsula corrupted forms of Christianity from a land already degraded by Anchorites, Stilites, and Ascetics of every shade. Whence come they? What age beheld this most novel specimen of penmanship? Curious and interesting questions, but scarcely to be discussed when hungry and weary after a long day's journey, so the reader is invited to judge for himself from the following specimen which I copied most carefully at the time.

The image shows two rows of handwritten symbols. The top row consists of seven characters: a vertical bar with a hook at the top, a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom, a vertical bar with a hook at the top and a diagonal stroke, a square with a diagonal stroke, a vertical bar with a hook at the top, a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom, and a vertical bar with a hook at the top. The bottom row consists of eight characters: a vertical bar with a hook at the top, a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom, a vertical bar with a hook at the top and a diagonal stroke, a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom, a vertical bar with a hook at the top, a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom, a vertical bar with a hook at the top, and a vertical bar with a hook at the bottom.

There were two lines above these illegible, and four below which had been punctured in the rock, but apparently never cut out. The rock on which they were engraved was 6 feet high, by 8 to 10 feet in length, and lay close to the road side. The letters were about 4 inches in height. The inscription was a solitary one, none of the rocks around, nor the high cliffs above from which it has fallen, bearing any corresponding symbols. Before I left the Desert I ascertained that the majority of these strange inscriptions are like this one, short and solitary, those in Wadi Mokatteb excepted.

Wadi Sidreh, in which we encamped for the night, is different from most of those we had yet passed—not so narrow and picturesque as Wadi Useit, nor so well clothed with shrubs as those we had just traversed—but still presenting a striking *coup d'œil*. Conceive the thoroughly drained basin of a mountain lake shut in on every side by rose-coloured hills rising precipitously from its edges, and setting off to great advantage the white gravel bed in which its waters were once cradled, and you have a brief but faithful description of Wadi Sidreh. From the centre, where our tents stood, there seemed no possibility of entrance or exit, except by scaling the precipitous cliffs that shut us in. On either side we had the red sandstone hills, through which we had been travelling all day, and at the bottom of the wadi a huge mountain of red granite, amid the clefts and peaks of which the wind howled dismally all night long, varied at intervals by the melancholy notes of the screech-owl, as he kept his solitary watch. Often afterwards I noticed the howling of the wind, as it rushed through the narrow gullies, and seemed to break like waves upon the adamant

sides of these Arabian Alps; and it suggested the idea, that from this circumstance, more probably than from the howlings of the beasts of prey, this Desert received its well known name of 'the howling wilderness.'

The only striking feature in the Desert by night is the starry heaven overhead. From the clearness of the atmosphere, there are not only many more stars visible than can be discerned in Europe, but they shine with most dazzling brilliancy. Sitting at my tent door this evening, the most prominent constellations were Taurus and Orion, Bootes and the two Dogs, with all their stars of greater and less degree. Aldebaran and the Pleiades, Rigel and Sirius, Arcturus and Procyon, shone with a lustre that would have gladdened the heart of a Herschell or an Arago; but my thoughts, while gazing on them, related not so much to the scientific discoveries of modern times, as to the amount of knowledge concerning the sidereal heavens possessed by the sages of the past. Perhaps in this very Desert, or, if not, in one lying in the same parallel of latitude, the patriarch Job watched by night these same constellations. From the manner in which Jehovah spoke to him of the stars, it is evident that he was well versed in the favourite study of the East, and could distinguish between 'the sons of Arcturus, the bands of Orion, and the sweet influences of Pleiades.' Nor is it difficult to conceive how it was that men, having once, through the blindness of sin, lost sight of the true Luminary, should have substituted in His room, as objects of adoration, the most brilliant and dazzling of His works, even the sun, the moon, and the hosts of heaven! Good old Bruin, the sailor's friend, appeared on the very verge of the northern horizon, completely shorn of the honours of his arched tail; but I sought in vain for the southern Cross, the pet constellation of the Indian Hemisphere, which ought to have been visible, and no doubt would have been so, had our tent been pitched at the summit of this Arabian Alp instead of its base.

*January 25.*—I had hoped, with the first dawn of day, to begin the exploration of the caves and rocks of Wadi Makhara (or Meghara, as the Bedouins pronounce it), but the same system of deceit and lying to save a paltry mile or two, which had been practised so recently in Wadi Teiyibeh, had been again resorted to the night before, to prevent our going further than W. Seyeh Sidreh; and Shaheen, though he had been here before, had evidently made no progress in the topography of the Desert, and could therefore render no assistance. Half an hour's ride brought us abreast of the mouth of the

Wadi Makhara, and revealed for what a trifle the poor Bedouin will lie. The lower part of Wadi Sidreh is very tortuous, turning first to the north, then to the east, and, finally, to the south, between high walls of red sandstone on the left, and red granite on the right. The embouchure of the Wadi Makhara is at the place where Wadi Sidreh merges into the famed Wadi Mokatteb, the 'Written Valley.' An island of sand has been formed in the middle of W. Sidreh, in the course of ages, by the deposits of the winter torrents from these valleys, at their point of confluence, on which the Arabs have for many generations been in the habit of burying those who die in the neighbourhood. It was only the second burying-ground we had met with since leaving Ayun Mousa.

Dismounting at the entrance of Wadi Makhara, 'the Valley of Caves,' and leaving the camels there—after copying one or two of the strange inscriptions on the rocks at the west side, I proceeded up it in a northerly direction, in search of the copper mines wrought by the ancient Egyptians, and of certain hieroglyphic inscriptions, containing the cartouches of their kings, which are supposed to have reference to these operations. For a while the search for the latter proved vain, as I had been led to believe they were at the base of the rocks; but, after climbing over masses of broken rock to the height of more than 100 feet from the bottom of the wadi, we discovered six of these hieroglyphic tablets cut on the face of the red sandstone rocks, nearly opposite to, but a little above the entrance to Wadi Kineh. Each of these tablets contains, beside other characters, the cartouche of an Egyptian king. Several of these I copied, among



Cheops.



Rameses.

which were those of Cheops, the builder of the great pyramid at Gizeh, who belonged to the 5th dynasty, and of Rameses the Great, who belonged to the 18th dynasty, and is supposed to have been the great grandson of that Pharaoh who was drowned in the Red Sea. Between those reigns, according to Wilkinson's computation, there elapsed a period of more than 1500 years; if, then, as is probable,

these crests were cut during the lifetime of the monarchs who bore them, some idea may be formed of the length of time during which the Egyptians carried on their mining operations in this quarter. In the Wadi Kinéh opposite, there is said to be the cartouche of a still more ancient king of Egypt. These tablets generally occur at places where the copper ore has been extracted from between the seams of red sandstone, and the incisions in many of them are as sharp and perfect as if they had been made only a few years ago. I searched in vain for a chamber, mentioned by Laborde, in which excavations to a great extent had been made, the roof being supported by a number of rude pillars of solid rock. With much difficulty we succeeded in squeezing into one chamber, between huge blocks that closed up the narrow entrance, believing we had lighted on it at last; but though twenty feet in length and seven feet high, it was destitute of pillars. One of these tablets contains the figure of a man, with a tiara on his head, striking a sharp iron instrument into the head of a victim kneeling at his feet. Bartlett, who has given a most correct and faithful drawing of it, supposes it to represent the king whose cartouche it bears holding by the beard or head-dress an Asiatic enemy. On the spot, I noted in my pocket-book that it was a priest offering up a human sacrifice; and in this opinion I am strongly confirmed, by finding that the mitre on his head is one of those which Kitto, the most accurate and learned illustrator of Oriental customs, gives in a plate, as the head-dress of the Egyptian priests; while the posture of the victim, and the mallet in the priest's hand, exactly correspond with his delineations of the immolation of human sacrifices taken from the tomb paintings of the land of Ham.<sup>1</sup>

I was also surprised to find on several of the tablets a line or two of what seemed the Sinitic characters, which abound on the rocks of the neighbouring wadi, followed by many lines of hieroglyphics, and the cartouche of a king bearing the annexed device. In another, there is one line of Sinitic writing and twelve of hieroglyphics. As I do not remember to have seen this noticed in any book of travels, I would invite the particular attention of future travellers to these tablets in Wadi Makhara; for if it be found, on further examination, that they contain genuine Sinitic inscriptions as well as hieroglyphics, this will go far to settle the age to which all the others belong, and may possibly



<sup>1</sup> Kitto's Pictorial History of Palestine and the Jews. Edit. Lond. 1844. Pp. 237, 368, and 584.

suggest some key for their future rendering. One other cartouche, copied from these tablets, is added on account of the Sacred *Tau*

contained in it, as this also may tend to throw light on the era of the Mokatteb inscriptions. In the absence of any satisfactory key wherewith to decipher them, the prevailing impression

among antiquarians, I believe, is, that they belong to the Christian era, owing to the frequency with which the figure of the cross occurs in them. That many modern names, with the figure of the cross prefixed or following, have been scratched in amid the ancient characters no one who has visited the spot can doubt; but, to my eye, the symbol in the more aged inscriptions resembled more closely the Egyptian *Tau* than the Christian cross. In the above cartouche, which no one can suspect of belonging to the Christian era, its form is almost identical with the figure we see constantly painted and sculptured in Catholic countries, as the cross on the Mount, viz.,



and also in the three subjoined. The clear inference from this is, that the occurrence of this symbol in these inscriptions cannot of itself, without further corroborative evidence, be held as fixing their execution

at a date posterior to the Christian era. I do not recollect to have seen this figure in any of the inscriptions I afterwards met with in Wadi Aleiat on Mount Serbal, Nakb el Howá, Wadi Lejáh, or Wadi Achdar.

The head of this wadi, which runs pretty nearly north, is bounded by high and rugged hills, beyond which is the mountain of Serabit el Khádem, where there are more Egyptian hieroglyphics and ancient monuments, first discovered by Niebuhr, but most accurately described by Dr Robinson. Mines of copper had at one time been wrought in the neighbouring Wadi en Nusb; and hence the majority of travellers who have visited it have set down these monuments as the tombstones of an ancient Egyptian cemetery, belonging to the colony at the mines. But Dr Robinson seems himself disposed to adopt a suggestion of Lord Prudhoe's, that it may have been a sacred place of pilgrimage for the ancient Egyptians, as the mountain near Mecca is for the Mohammedans of the present day. I was most anxious to have crossed the mountains to visit this interesting spot; but our Arabs assured me that they are so precipitous as to be impassable, not only for camels, but for men on foot, so that I was obliged to forego my

cherished plan, and must, therefore, subjoin, in a foot-note, Dr Robinson's description of the place.<sup>1</sup>

We left Wadi Makhara at 10.15, and proceeded down the upper part of Wadi Mokatteb without discovering any inscriptions, but enjoying an enchanting view of the magnificent Serbal, with its lofty jagged peaks glittering in the burning sun. Six of these were distinctly visible, towering high above all the surrounding mountains, and each in form reminding one forcibly of the Dent-du-Midi, on the flank of Mont Blanc. At 11.30, on the right hand, in entering the lower part of the wadi, we came abreast of a ridge of red sandstone rock, jutting out like a promontory into the plain called Hagar el Nameen, completely covered with inscriptions in the Sinaitic character, some of which are in excellent preservation, though the greater number are much defaced by the lapse of time, the action of the elements, and the soft nature of the stone. I counted thirteen lines, but of these ten are now so obliterated that it would be impossible to copy

<sup>1</sup> "These lie mostly within the compass of a small enclosure 160 feet long from E. to W., by 70 feet broad, marked by heaps of stones thrown or fallen together, the remains perhaps of former walls or rows of low buildings. Within this space are seen about 15 upright stones like tombstones, and several fallen ones covered with Egyptian hieroglyphics; and also the remains of a small temple, whose columns are decorated with the head of Isis for a capital. At the eastern end is a subterranean chamber, excavated in the solid rock, resembling an Egyptian sepulchre. It is square, and the roof is supported in the middle by a square column left from the rock. Both the column and the sides of the rock are covered with hieroglyphics, and in each of the sides is a small niche. The whole surface is covered with fallen columns, fragments of sculpture, and hewn stones, strewn in every direction, over which the pilgrim can with difficulty find his way. Other similar upright stones stand without the enclosure in every direction, and, even at some distance, each surrounded by a heap of stones, which may have been thrown together by the Arabs. These upright stones, both within and without the enclosure, vary from 7 to 10 feet in height, while they are from 18 inches to 2 feet in breadth, and from 14 to 16 inches in thickness. They are rounded off on the top, forming an arch over the broadest sides. On one of these sides usually appears the common Egyptian symbol of the winged globe with two serpents, and one or more priests presenting offerings to the gods, while various figures and cartouches cover the remaining sides. They are said to bear the names of various Egyptian kings; but no two of them have the name of the same monarch. According to Major Felix, the name of Osirtisen I. is found on one of them, whom Wilkinson supposes to have been the patron of Joseph. Not the least singularity about these monuments is the wonderful preservation of the inscriptions upon this soft sandstone, exposed as they have been to the air and weather, during the lapse of so many ages."—Robinson's *Bib. Researches*, vol. i., p. 113. See also Lepsius' *Account of Serabit el Khadem*, in his *Letters on Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sinai*, p. 301.



them exactly ; and, with the exception of the figure of an ass, cut out at the bottom of one of these lines, I observed nothing in this group that might pass for a hieroglyphic. After passing this rock the valley gets broader, and, in half-an-hour more, we came to the broadest part, where the Ghebel Nabbeh rises to the right ; and here we found numerous inscriptions on the rocks on both sides, as also rude designs of men with swords, camels, donkeys, and gazelles or ibexes. The inscriptions were generally short, consisting of a single line, or two at most. Among them I noticed three or four in Greek, with the emblem of the cross, evidently of a much more modern date than the majority, and one in Hebrew, originally well cut, but now so defaced that many of the letters are illegible. A certain *Ιωασηφ Μοναχος*, probably one of the fraternity of St Catherine, has been most indefatigable in adding his name wherever these inscriptions of the olden time are to be found, and many, as little known as he, have followed his example. Under a group of these characters, nearly defaced, in the Wadi Makhara, a loyal Russian had incised these words, 'Deus salvum fac nostrum Regem Imperatoremque Nicolium I. 1850 ;' but, with wonderful modesty, he had not subscribed his Latin orison with his own name. The majority of these inscriptions were on blocks of sandstone, easily accessible from the bed of the wadi ; and, though some were at a considerable height above its level, it was not a perpendicular height, but there were either fallen rocks or projecting ledges below them, by standing on which the inscribers could easily have accomplished their purpose ; in short, nowhere—Hagar el Nameen perhaps excepted—were they at such a height or in such a position, as to have required scaffolding for their execution. A few seem to have been incised with great care, others to have been punctured with some pointed instrument with a view to incision, and never completed, but the vast majority appear to have been originally cut, in a rude and hasty manner, by passing a chisel once along the surface of the rock.

Of course, the age, the authorship, and the meaning of these rude inscriptions, have been canvassed with deep interest by all the learned palæographers and archæologists of Europe and America for upwards of half a century ; but it is probably not too much to affirm, that no solution has yet been arrived at which clears away the mystery attaching to their history, and gives a generally received and reliable clue to their meaning. There are two theories propounded on the subject. One, that they were the handiwork of the Israelites while they sojourned in this Desert ; the other, that they were the pastime of Christian shepherds who resided permanently in the Desert, or of

Christian pilgrims in search of Sinai. The modern supporters of each claim to have made a satisfactory translation, in accordance with their own views, by alphabets skilfully compounded of waifs and strays, legs and arms and heads culled from the alphabets of the surrounding nations, modern or ancient, which can count cousinship within the twentieth degree! That these inscriptions are ancient was maintained by Cosmas Indicopleustes, in A.D. 536; by the Superior of the Franciscan Monks in Egypt in 1722; by Clayton, Bishop of Clogher, in 1753; and by the Rev. Charles Forster in our own days.<sup>1</sup> The Franciscan Superior attributes them to the Chaldeans; all the others attribute them to the Israelites on their passage through the wilderness. Mr Forster claims the merit of having deciphered them by an alphabet of his own construction, and discovered that they are records of some of the most remarkable incidents in the forty years' wanderings of the Israelites.

Among the advocates of a much later origin for these inscriptions, the most distinguished is Professor Beer of Leipsic, who, in 1839, constructed an alphabet, by which he believes he has managed to decipher many of them. As the result of his studies, he finds that the characters belong to a distinct and independent alphabet, which he supposes was used by the Nabathæans, or inhabitants of Arabia Petræa, before the Arabic language was known in the Desert, and he regards these inscriptions as the only monuments of that language or writing, which now exist. On palæographic grounds he supposes the greater part of them could not have been written earlier than the 4th century, and he attributes them to the early Christian pilgrims.<sup>2</sup> Dr Lepsius agrees with Professor Beer in rejecting an Israelitish origin; but, recognising the difficulty of a pilgrim engraving these letters in the rock with his palmer's staff during his noontide halt, he attributes them to persons inhabiting permanently these wadis in the first centuries before and after Christ.<sup>3</sup>

There are difficulties in the way of accepting either of these theories. In the first place, the rival alphabets which ingenious men have compounded in their own brains from those of cognate languages, and the irreconcilable conclusions worked out from them, will lead most reflecting men to set them aside as destroying all evidence either way arising from that source. Then, on the supposition that these are the works of the Israelites—however much we should like to adopt that

<sup>1</sup> Voice of Israel from the rocks of Sinai.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson's Biblical Researches, vol. i., note 17, p. 554.

<sup>3</sup> Lepsius' Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sinai.' Bohn Edition, p. 299.

theory—how comes it that they are to be met with nowhere in all this peninsula beyond the group of the Sinaitic mountains? Surely there were not wanting incidents of momentous interest in their history after they left the wilderness of Sinai behind; and yet to the north of Ghebel Tih, to the east of Ghebel Mousa, and to the north of Akabah, through all the scenes of their 39 years wanderings, not a vestige of these characters has been discovered, except a line or two at Petra, where the Israelites certainly never were, as it was within the border of Edom?<sup>1</sup> With the exception of the top of Mount Serbal and Ghebel Hammam near Tûr, the Wadi Mokatteb is the only place where they occur in great numbers; if then they were cut by the Israelites, what station on their journey must we suppose this to be? Is this Rephidim, the only place we know of where they made a considerable halt ere reaching the wilderness of Sinai? I am not aware that Mr Forster takes such ground, and no recent traveller at least places it so near the sea.

But, though we cannot take as evidence the professed renderings given on either side, it may be remarked in passing, that there is a gross anachronism in one of those given by Mr Forster, which, even were there no rival alphabet, cannot but shake our faith in the accuracy of all the rest. I refer to an inscription which he takes to be a record of the miracle at Meribah Kadesh, where Moses committed the sin which excluded him from Canaan, and which he renders thus: 'The eloquent speaker strikes the rock, flows forth the water, falling down.' An examination of Numbers, chap. xx., will show that the miracle at Meribah was performed in the beginning of the fortieth year of their wanderings, just before they took their final march, compassing the territory of Edom and Moab, to enter the land of promise, so that they never could have been in the Wadi Mokatteb after leaving Kadesh. One of two conclusions, therefore, is inevitable with regard to this inscription, either Mr Forster must have given it a wrong interpretation through the failure of his alphabet; or, if he is right in his rendering, it is an apocryphal production, and no work of the Israelites. The adoption of either conclusion is fatal to his theory.

The difficulties in the way of adopting Beer's theory, indorsed in the main by Lepsius, are also considerable. If, as these inscriptions seem to indicate, this was a language extensively used not only in speaking but in writing, during the currency of the 4th century, how comes it that, in the time of Cosmas, scarcely two centuries later, that

<sup>1</sup> See note on Kadesh, below, Chap. vi.

language had not only become a dead one, but that all knowledge of its characters had also perished?—for the explanations offered by his Jewish friends are evidently conjectural. Again, where could sandalled pilgrims—with staff, and scrip, and serge, and scallop-shell—find materials in the Desert for the execution of such work, rude though the form of the letters be? And why refrain from putting forth their skill during all the journey from Egypt or Palestine till they came within reach of the mountains of Sinai?

Leaving the meaning of these inscriptions to those who have made palæography their study, and have leisure to pursue it, I think the time requisite for cutting them must naturally lead to the adoption of Lepsius' view as the correct one, that the parties, whosoever they were, must have been not mere passers-by, but permanent occupants of the country; though, as he gives no proof for assigning them to the first centuries before and after Christ, I venture to differ from him on the question of time, and to suggest that probably they were the work of the later Amalekites, who were anciently dwellers in this very Desert. There are many things which conspire to render this probable. We know that this region was occupied by them in the days of Israel's wanderings, as well as for many ages afterwards, for they attacked them on their journey, somewhere within 50 miles of this very spot. Again, it is difficult to account for the Sinaitic inscriptions around the ancient temple at Serabit el Khadem, except on the supposition that, originally belonging to a colony of Egyptians, it was on their abandonment of the mines, fixed upon as the High Place and the seat of government, of a nation possessing the surrounding territory; unless indeed we should identify it, improbably I think, with the place where Jethro the Midianite exercised his priesthood. If the Egyptians employed at the mines, by force or for reward, the natives of the country whom they had conquered, that would account for the insertion of the Sinaitic characters which occur in the tablets of Wadi Makhara, while it would afford additional probability that the writings of Mokatteb were the work of the Amalekites.

The same writings occur in great numbers on the summit of Mount Serbal; and there can be no doubt that those who climbed its rugged and almost inaccessible heights did so for the purpose of worship. The question then arises, was Serbal reckoned a holy mountain before it was taken for Sinai by the early pilgrims? Of course, until its writings are deciphered we can have no *direct* proof of this; but there is strong probability of it from the name it bears, for the literal signification of it in the Coptic language, as in the Hebrew, is 'Lord'

*Baal*;<sup>1</sup> and a place better fitted, by its height and isolation, for the observation and worship of the heavenly host, it is impossible to conceive; while holding the tenets and practices of Sabæan worship, as the Amalekites in common with the children of the East did, nothing is more natural than that they should bestow upon their holy mountain the name of their god. In further corroboration of the probability of these inscriptions being the work of the Amalekites, Robinson—who adopts Beer's views of their Christian origin—admits that the Professor had not been able to discover, according to his plan of interpretation, a single Jewish or Christian name in any of them, though he regards them as nothing more than a mere register of names.

After having examined, as carefully as my limited time would permit, the famed inscriptions of Mokatteb, I struck off towards Ghebel Nabbeh on the left, in search of some copper-mines mentioned by Dr Wilson as having been wrought between the seams of the granite rock in a perpendicular direction, but failed in finding them, as he has specified no landmarks for the guidance of those who follow him. The Sheikh and his men knew nothing about them, but told me that the natural caverns in these hills were the storehouses of their tribe, where they laid up their corn. I asked if they did not fear being robbed by one another? But the answer was a most emphatic *La, La, La*. No! By hostile tribes their storehouses might be pillaged; but, if one of themselves turned robber, he would be expelled the tribe and be disgraced throughout the Desert.

After leaving that part of Wadi Mokatteb where the inscriptions are most numerous, we still continued to traverse it for about an hour and a-half; latterly, over rough uneven ground, until it ends in a pass or defile somewhat resembling Budrah, which leads into Wadi Nátet. Ghebel Banát, with its double peaks here directly in front of us, shut out Ghebel Serbal from view. Wadi Nátet is not mentioned by Burekhardt at all, and Dr Wilson includes it in Wadi Feiran. It is a large triangular plain, having its apex eastward, and its base to the west. At the northern angle of its base, the path along which

<sup>1</sup> Rädiger, as quoted by Lepsius, p 113, traces the name of the mountain to its heathen worship, but derives it from *Serb*, the Arabic for palm-tree, making Serbal signify 'The palm grove of Baal;' but the temperature of the top of the mountain renders it impossible that a palm grove could ever have grown there. I think there cannot be a doubt that the first part of the name is derived from the Hebrew שר, *Sher*—a ruler, a governor—the signification which the word bears in the Coptic, and I believe in the Arabic also.

we travelled from Wadi Mokatteb enters it; at the southern angle is the opening through which Wadi Feiran comes up from the sea, continuing its course along the right limb of the triangle, and eastward from its apex till it reaches the paradise of the Towerah, and the ruins of what, in early Christian times, was the Episcopal town of Feiran. We kept well to the left, along the ridge of low hills forming the northern limb of the triangle; and, when near its apex, at the point where Wadi Naseráne strikes off to the left, we came unexpectedly on a large number of ancient tumuli, generally circular, composed of heaps of stones thrown together. I have been particular in thus describing the appearance of the Wadi, because I would invite the attention of future travellers to these graves, which no former traveller seems to have observed, or at least to have thought it worth his while to mention. To whom do these graves belong? The Arabs declared that they contained none of their dead, for they never were in the habit of burying there—that they were very ancient, but that they knew nothing more of their history than that their fathers had told them these tumuli were the *Turbet es Yahoud*—‘The Graves of the Jews;’ and that among them they had never had another name. I asked Nassar if no one had ever had the curiosity to open one of these cairns, but his answer was a decided negative. Can these be the graves of the Israelites, or can they belong to the age of the Exodus? Considering how superstitious the Arabs are with regard to the resting-places of the dead, and having regard to the little change which has taken place in their manners since the Bible days downwards, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that these cairns may have remained undisturbed since Israel’s days, unless some future explorer shall find internal evidence to disprove it.

I am inclined to look for Replidim in this locality. The objections which might be urged to doing so are, the improbability of the Israelites’ graves being still extant; and the suspicion excited by the name of the Wadi Naseráne—‘Valley of the Christians’—that they belong to a much later period;—the fact that Replidim is thus placed further to the west than even Cosmas and the earlier writers suggest;—and that, supposing Ghebel Mousa to be the true Sinai, it would make the rock in Horeb, from whence Moses brought the water, three days’ journey from the camp. The probabilities in its favour are these,—that there are no ruins belonging to the Christian era known to the Arabs in all this neighbourhood, such as are to be found at Feiran, and at the Nakb el Howa; and that they are in the habit of attributing whatever puzzles them, not to the Jewish, but to the Christian occu-

pation of the peninsula, so that the name given to these graves may be presumed to be something more than guess work;—that the journey from the mouth of Wadi Feiran at the sea to this spot, is said by the Arabs to occupy two days, which would exactly correspond with the halts made by the Israelites between the station by the sea in the Wilderness of Sin and Rephidim, supposing them to have marched through the broad Wadi Feiran instead of scrambling up the wild and narrow Nakb el Budrah;—that there is a remarkable isolated hill, called by the Arabs Ghebel el Muthbah, which rises up at the very apex of the triangle where Wadi Nátet and Wadi Feiran join, which would answer exactly to the hill where Moses sat to witness the combat between Israel and Amalek, while Aaron and Hur held up his wearied hands towards heaven;—that this broad plain is not only admirably fitted for a battle-field, but, supposing the Amalekites to have had their head-quarters either at Serabit el Khádem or at Feiran, it would be the very position where they would be likely to attack the Israelites, to prevent them from marching farther into their territories; and, finally, that it is only a few hours distant from Ghebel Serbal, which all the earlier traditions hand down to us as Sinai. These probabilities seem greatly to outweigh any objections to placing Rephidim here; and, in that case, the graves which bear in the mouths of the Bedouins the Jewish name, are probably those of the Amalekites who fell in the battle.

Makrizi, the Arab historian, quoted by Burekhardt,<sup>1</sup> describes Feiran as ‘one of the towns of the Amalekites;’ thus showing that they were not altogether a nomade race, though, if Feiran had been a town in Moses’ day, of which Israel became possessed, or through which they marched, some mention would doubtless have been made of it. There is nothing in the geographical position of Wadi Nátet inconsistent with an attack by the Amalekites from Feiran; but there is a passage of Scripture relating to that conflict, which compels us, if we hold this place to be Rephidim, to abandon the idea that the Amalekites marched from Feiran to the battle; for, in that case, they must have attacked Israel in front, and not in rear. It is as follows: ‘Remember what Amalek did unto thee by the way, when ye were come forth out of Egypt; how he met thee by the way, *and smote the hindmost of thee, even all that were feeble behind thee*, when thou wast faint and weary.’<sup>2</sup> Supposing them to have mustered at Serabit el Khádem,

<sup>1</sup> Travels in Syria, p. 617.

<sup>2</sup> Deut. xxv. 17, 18. Lepsius states that ‘*the principal attack of the front was immediately supported by one on the rear guard.*’ Letters, p. 540. This is

where there are indications of permanent occupation, and to have marched down the wadis to the north of Wadi Nátet, their mode of attack must have been precisely the cowardly one described in the sacred narrative. But, independently of this, there could have been no town of the Amalekites at Feiran in Israel's day; otherwise, to place Rephidim beyond Feiran to the east, would require us to assume that the whole host of Israel, before reaching it, marched through a town of the Amalekites; and to place it to the west of Feiran, as Cosmas, Eusebius, and others do, would compel us to suppose that Moses and the elders passed through the alleged town to get to the rock in Horeb; both of which suppositions are plainly inadmissible.

Passing Ghebel el Muthbah, we entered the Wadi Feiran about three o'clock, and journeyed on through its innumerable windings till darkness overtook us. We were now shut in on either side by mountains of red granite, across which ran black seams of porphyry, giving them at the distance the appearance of red ploughed fields intersected by hedge rows; but I was too much absorbed by those graves we had found, and in pondering whether the lonely Muthbah might be the hill of prayer, where 'the spirit was willing but the flesh weak,' and the plain beneath the scene of Joshua's early prowess, to attend much to the present aspects of the scenery. I fancied as we rode slowly along, that the stream from the smitten rock most probably ran down this very valley, to the thirsty murmuring crowds, and that, along it old Jethro brought his daughter and his grandsons to restore them to the embrace of their husband and father, the leader of the Lord's host. Dream-land it may have been, but to me it was as delightful as it was exciting, and the weary hours passed on without my being sensible of the usual fatigue produced by the jogging of the camel. There are bounds to dreaming, however, as to every thing else. Darkness had settled down on our path—a bleak piercing wind, despite my bernouse, penetrated to the very bones, but still on we plodded without a hint of its being time to stop. It was much too late, after the time spent in the forenoon among the inscriptions, to dream of reaching the wells of Wadi Feiran for our camping ground. Surprised, therefore, at the unwonted activity of the Bedouins, who are generally the first to cry a halt, I asked at last how much farther they intended to go? The answer was, that the Salíwah division of the tribe to which Nassar and his family belonged, were encamped at the wells; and, if the

unsupported by a shadow of evidence, and in direct opposition to the passage of Scripture quoted above.



Howajee would allow them to continue, they wished to reach their tents before stopping. This was too reasonable a request to be refused, and two hours more was mentioned as the probable additional duration of the day's journey. Before the lapse of half that time, however, we came upon a stray camel, which Halil recognizing even in the dark as his own, mounted and brought along with us; and from this they concluded that their tents were nearer than they had at first supposed. In another quarter of an hour we came in sight of many lights, sparkling in the midst of a grove of sant and tarfa trees, at a place called Heshúeh, about an hour below the wells. These lights were the fires at the tent-doors for culinary purposes, evidently betokening a considerable encampment; but, with one or two exceptions, they had all died out before we arrived, and it was only next morning that I found there were but sixteen tents, pitched nearly in a straight line.

Here the Sheikh and one or two of his men found their tents, and their wives came out to embrace them, so orders were given to have our tents pitched. It was nearly half-past seven when we arrived, and as I had either been climbing rocks, or jolting on a camel, since seven in the morning, without a moment's rest, it may be imagined that my own satisfaction quite equalled that of my escort. From all quarters the men came to render assistance in unloading the camels and pitching the tents, and hearty were the congratulations and rapid as the telegraph itself the interchange of news, that took place between those who had been in Egypt and their brethren who had tarried at home. With difficulty the tents were got up, because the wind, which had blown freshly during the latter part of the journey had now become a hurricane, and for some hours I expected every moment that mine would be blown over. This certainly would have been the case but for the wind ropes attached to the top of the pole, and driven deep, with iron pegs, into the ground, which kept the pole in equilibrium, and prevented too great a strain on the wooden pegs that supported the tent. As it was, the wind blew through the openings between the roof and the uprights of it, with such violence, that we were obliged to use the '*fanoos*,' or paper lantern, to my great inconvenience in writing, as the candles were extinguished as fast as lighted. The sand, meanwhile, rising in whirlwinds, not only blinded and choked us, but penetrated clothes and bedding, and supplied a gritty condiment to the evening meal, which rendered it uneatable. Much as I desired to get to rest, there was nothing for it but to watch the straining and creaking pole, and to steady it as every fresh blast

came tearing down the valley, until, about two in the morning, when the wind fell suddenly, and there was no longer any impediment to the repose we so much required.



Written Rocks in Wadi Mokatteb.

## CHAPTER IV.

## FEIRAN TO GHEBEL MOUSA.

*January 26th.*—Though still in the Desert, I became early conscious that we were not, as in days past, in solitude. The crowing of cocks, the bleating of the sheep, as they were led out in search of pasture among the clefts of the barren mountains around, and the merry prattle of the children as they gathered round the Frangee's tent, mingling with the sound of harsher voices from the black tents beyond, soon drove sleep away. I was not more than half dressed when Nassar, true to the traditional hospitality of the Desert, presented himself at the tent-door, bearing a dish of lamb stewed in rice, and seasoned with saffron, which his wife had cooked for my breakfast, bidding me at the same time welcome to the tents of his tribe. The rice thus cooked was one of the best dishes I ever tasted. I had had a hint over night that such was his intention, but wishing to spare him the expense, I told Shaheen to dissuade him from it, but the kind-hearted fellow would take no refusal; he said it was the established custom of his tribe, and he could not hold up his head amongst his fellows if he were to neglect the duty which his position as Sheikh imposed on him. After the morning meal was finished, he brought his little daughter, a child between three and four years old, in his arms to visit me. He seemed both fond and proud of her, poor little naked thing, and not without reason; for her face, though begrimed with dirt, was not without some claim to beauty, and if spared, ten or a dozen years hence, I doubt not her vanity may prompt the exclamation, "I am black, but comely." I made her some trifling present; giving him at the same time as *backshish* for his wife, who did not appear, such things as we could spare from the canteen, not omitting some sweetmeats, for which the Arabs display a childish fondness, and Nassar retired with a profusion of thanks.

The next visitor introduced was his father, a little, shrivelled, old man, with a flowing beard and flashing eye. On asking his age, the answer was one I often got to the same question, 'As many as God

wills.' Poor ignorant creatures! months and years are periods of reckoning almost unknown to them. From the time when the winter rains fall until they fall again; from the time when the dates are gathered until the new harvest arrives, they may be able to keep some computation; but beyond the first cycle it is a thing too hard for them: and among the scores to whom I have put the question, I never found one that had any idea of the number of years he had lived, unless perhaps an approximate estimate could be made by reference to some event which had become an epoch in the tribe. Thus I had one of my Bedouin attendants described to me as no higher than this, placing the hand horizontally about three feet from the ground, when Toussoun Pasha, Mahomet Ali's eldest son, and father of the last Pasha, passed through the Desert with his army to subdue Arabia. I should take Abu Nassar to have been a man of threescore. The interview ended with a present of tobacco, and the old man retired, evidently in hot haste to charge his chibouk. Nassar returned once more, bringing a lump of dried dates, cut out of one of the skins in which they preserve them. The dates of Wadi Feiran are reckoned the finest in the world, and I was glad to have the opportunity of tasting them. He came with great secrecy, and shut the tent-door before he produced them, begging that I would not let Shaheen see them. I understood the reason, and promised. He then preferred a request for a bottle of brandy, as they often needed it for *sore throats*, but this I unhesitatingly refused.

Before leaving Cairo, I had resolved to halt a day at Feiran, for the purpose of ascending Mount Serbal. The entrance of the wadi which runs up to its base, is beside the wells of Feiran, an hour's journey farther eastward; and it was arranged that the tents should be removed from Heshuéh and pitched there during the day, while I went on before with a Bedouin\* guide well acquainted with the mountain, who could give me the names of all the localities seen from the summit. While the camel was being prepared, I went to pay a visit to the Sheikh el Kebeir, or great chief of the tribe. Conducted by Nassar, we passed along the row of black tents, and I was able to make a good inspection of them. The cloth is of goats' hair, and the quantity necessary for a tent seems to be woven in the entire piece, or if woven in small widths, to be pieced together so as to form one. The tents are always of an oblong shape; and the simplest way of forming an idea of the style of thing, is by supposing a large tarpaulin hoisted lengthwise on six poles, the three to the back of the tent being much shorter than those in front, so as to give a slope to the roof; it

reaches quite to the ground on the two sides, and within a couple of feet of it to the back, but in front a mere selvedge hangs over the poles, thus leaving the whole tent open to view on that side. Of course the cloth is held fast in this position by cords and stakes driven into the ground on every side. The only difference I observed between the arrangement of these tents and those of the Terabein in Wadi Wurdan was, that while the haréem in the latter was formed by drawing a curtain of the same material *across* the tent, so as to give the women the back part of it for their use; it was formed in these, by running the partition curtain from front to back. The haréems in the tents at Heshuéh were consequently quite as open to the view, as I walked down the row, as the quarters of the rougher sex. At night, however, a curtain is hung up to secure privacy.

Mousa Ibn Nissar, the Sheikh el Kebeir of the Towerah, I found was not in the encampment. He had been sent for by the Pasha nine months before, and had been at Cairo till lately, when Abbas took him along with him on his voyage up the Nile. The Bedouins declared that he was there on business; but Shaheen unfolded its nature, by telling me he was a prisoner at large—kept as a hostage for the good behaviour of his tribe, in the vicinity of his Highness' bowstring! In his absence the duties of Sheikh-in-chief devolved on his brother, a tall, well-made man of middle age, but not particularly striking in appearance. He wore the striped woollen *abia* of the Bedouins above the long shirt already described, and sported a pair of faded Turkish slippers on his feet, and a pair of pistols of antediluvian manufacture in his leathern girdle. The latter was the only feature that distinguished him from the other members of the tribe who were present. The Sheikh *pro tempore* was standing, surrounded by a group, before his tent as I approached. Saláms were exchanged—Nassar, as master of ceremonies, introduced the Frank to Abu Akh Mousa, acting Sheikh el Kebeir, etc., and the latter, leading the way into the tent, immediately squatted on his heels, and invited me to be seated by his side. The others—sixteen in number, exclusive of Nassar and the dragoman—assuming the same attitude, completed the circle round the fire. The Bedouins invariably sit in this posture, as distinguished from the cross-legged position of the Turks; and though a European can with difficulty bear for five minutes the tension of muscles it produces, I have seen our men sit for hours at night in this position without a fidget or any apparent weariness. For my own part, waving ceremony, I adopted the Turkish mode as the least painful of the two, and the *séance* began.

In the name of his absent brother, the-acting Sheikh welcomed me to the tents of the Towerah, and begged my acceptance of a young kid, which an urchin had just brought up to the door. I told Shaheen to thank him for his hospitality, but that he must not be offended if I declined the offered gift, as Nassar, my own Sheikh, had already well discharged all the duties of hospitality towards me. Nassar gave evident signs of appreciating the compliment paid to himself; and I thought the Depute Great Sheikh seemed to be rather relieved than otherwise that this, the most onerous part of his duty, had been performed by deputy, for no vulgar pressing ensued. We now proceeded to the wonted civilities of pipes and coffee. There were but two dirty chibouks, about the length of a Thames coalheaver's 'clay,' without mouthpiece or ornament of any kind, to do duty for the whole company; and one of these was presented to me, while the Sheikh appropriated the other. To refuse the offer of a pipe is a piece of ill-breeding not easily forgiven, so per force, I was obliged to take a whiff or two; but, as I was smoking a cigar on entering the tent, I made that the excuse for handing on the calumet to my next neighbour. The whole process of making coffee was conducted before us, while the pipes were passing round from mouth to mouth. From a bag which the Sheikh carried at his girdle, he took a small handful of raw coffee beans; these were put in an iron ladle, such as we use for melting lead, and toasted for not more than a couple of minutes, then pounded in an earthen mortar with a club till they were reduced to a powder, which was thrown into a tin jug of boiling-water standing among the embers, and allowed to boil for a couple of minutes, after which the beverage was served out, without sugar, in the tiny cups called *fingáns*, peculiar to those eastern regions.

While the coffee was getting ready, the Sheikh apologised for receiving me in a tent so worn and full of holes. Their proper residence, he said, was at the wells farther up the valley—they had better tents there, but had brought these light ones with them, as they had come down here only for a few weeks on account of the pasture for their flocks. Whether this was said, after the manner of Caleb Balderstone, merely for the credit of the tribe, I am unable to determine, but it excited a loud laugh from the other side of the curtain immediately behind my back; and, on looking round, I found that the ladies of the Harém—of whom I had counted three in passing, besides several children—had all crept up close to the screen, determined to hear at least, if Arab etiquette prevented them from seeing, all that passed. How vividly that sudden peal of laughter recalled to my mind a very

different scene in Abraham's tent at Mamre, which provoked laughter also behind the curtain! The relative position of the parties must have been very similar, for Sarah though unseen heard all that was said, and when chidden put in a word boldly in her own defence.

The muffled ladies, however, were not alone in their curiosity—a number of boys had gathered round us to stare at the stranger; so, after some questions about the Sheikh, the number of their tents, etc.. I asked if any of the boys could read? An answer was given in the negative. I told them that this was a great misfortune—that among the Ingleez a very large proportion of the people, old and young, could both read and write, and there was no reason why they should not do the same—that they would find it most useful now that their intercourse with Egypt and the Franjees was becoming every day more frequent—that they would derive much amusement and instruction were they only able to pass the long winter nights in reading—and that they would then be able to understand why it was that so many strangers came to this land, not as they supposed in search of hidden treasures, but because in olden times Allah had done great wonders here. We have been in the habit of hearing that the Arabs despise learning as a useless and unmanly thing, but not so the Towerah. Notwithstanding the disadvantage of my being obliged to speak through an interpreter, they listened most attentively to what I said, and all in that circle eagerly and at once declared that they wished much to learn to read and write—that they felt the want of these things, but who would teach them? I replied that, if they really wished to be taught, I had no doubt many would be willing to devote themselves to the work. They repeated that they were anxious to learn; and that, if the Howajee or some other Franjee would come and teach them they would be very glad. *Tieb, Tieb*—‘good, good’—they exclaimed, with great emphasis. Whether the female portion of the auditory approved or dissented I cannot say, but it was certainly not a matter of indifference to them. In their eagerness to take in all, they leaned so heavily against the curtain that I expected it to give way, and that we should have them amongst us by an involuntary invasion. Pursuing the subject, which I had deeply at heart, I asked the Sheikh if he, and his brother, and the rest of the tribe, would receive a Franjee kindly and treat him well, provided he should leave his home for the purpose of teaching them? The manner in which they responded to this left no doubt in my mind of their perfect sincerity. Some questions were then put

about the heat of the climate, and the possibility of a European remaining there in summer. They admitted that in the middle of the day it was very hot, but stated that the mornings and evenings were always cool. I assured him that, when I returned to Franghistan, I would let their desires be known, and would try to get some one to come to them. I was glad to find, on afterwards referring to Dr Wilson's book, that he had there stated his opinion that if a mission to the Arabs of the peninsula could be established, Feiran would be the proper place for its head-quarters.

‘Whom shall I send, or who will go for us?’ With such an instance of self dedication to the Lord's work as the Patagonian mission affords, I believe this question has but to be put in connection with a description of the field of labour to induce some to respond, ‘Here am I, send me.’ Since my visit, one of the greatest obstacles to the establishment of such a mission has been taken out of the way by the repeal of the death penalty in case of a Mohammedan apostatizing from his religion. That such a penalty would have been enforced by the Bedouins themselves against men of their own tribe, except as a means of revenge, I do not believe; because, so far from being strict Mohammedans, the poor creatures are much nearer absolute Paganism, and it is rare to meet a man among them who can recite correctly the most common prayers of the Koran. But fanatics are still to be found among the tribes, who would have thought they did God service by destroying a pervert; and as a leaven of Protestantism once introduced would probably stir up here, animosity and persecution on the part of the monks of St Catherine, as it has done on the part of the Romish priests in Turkey, there might, but for the repeal of that penalty, have been danger to the converts from officials whom the monks, or their Bishop at Cairo, might have influenced to use the strong arm of law against the spread of apostacy. If the British Consul-General at Cairo be a man who takes any interest in the Gospel, his influence in the present state of the law would be sufficient to secure protection both for the missionary and the converts, from Government persecution; and, that being gained, it is to be hoped that the interest which the Arabs themselves may be expected to take in education, would, by the blessing of God, be sufficient to protect the missionary against isolated attacks of fanaticism. He would require to be not only a man of much self-denial, faith, and prayer, but also of an active practical turn, capable of communicating to those wanderers the elements of agriculture, and of awakening in them some enthusiasm for the improvements he introduces.



The excellent American missionaries, who have already been the means of introducing the Gospel of Christ into Syria, look upon the whole Arab-speaking population, from Mount Cassius and the Orontes in Asia to the western boundaries of the kingdom of Morocco in Africa, as a field whitening to the harvest—a field, however, which is too vast for them to overtake unaided, at least during the present generation. But surely among the churches of Britain—perhaps among the churches of Scotland, whose sympathies are thoroughly enlisted on behalf of our American brethren—an effort might be made to relieve them of anxiety concerning this peninsula, by planting a mission in it, by means of which, with God's blessing, the Gospel might triumph, in the very birth-place of the law, and 'the Desert rejoice and blossom like the rose.' A suitable man might, perhaps, be found in the missionary schools of Cairo or Beyrout, among the Arab speaking native Christians; but, for my own part, I have more confidence in one of the Anglo-Saxon race, and believe he would be more acceptable to the Bedouins than a Syrian or Copt. He would have to contend with prejudice and jealousy, and perhaps some measure of opposition at first; but he who would plant the cross in the wilderness must not be dismayed at even more formidable obstacles. A small annual contribution from every one who has travelled in the Desert for the last ten years, would amply suffice to maintain a missionary among the Towerah. I would fain invite attention and Christian effort to the case of these poor Arabs, for their perfect ignorance has moved my inmost soul to pity. They are Mohammedans in name, but nothing more. Shaheen, who pretends to be a strict Mohammedan, looks down upon them with the most supreme contempt, and says they are no better than dogs. They pay no attention to the injunctions of the Korán in killing their food; they observe none of the ablutions practised by the followers of the Prophet; and during the fortnight they travelled with me from Cairo to Heshuéh, I never saw anything on their part approaching to an act of worship. As an example of their ignorance, it is right to mention here, though anticipating the narrative, that, at a later period, in passing a graveyard where some of Nassar's near relations had been buried, he fell down on his face and began to recite aloud some short prayers, which seemed to afford the dragoman infinite amusement at the time, and served as a butt for his ridicule during the rest of the time the Towerah were with us. Being chid for such unseemly conduct, and asked why he thus tormented the poor fellow, he replied that he had been roused to mirth by the ridiculous mistakes Nassar made in his prayers; and

then added, that they were no Mohammedans, no better than dogs, because they knew nothing of their religion, and could not say a simple prayer correctly.

The Towerah are the poorest tribe in the Desert; which is not to be wondered at, from the barrenness of the country they occupy. I was unable to obtain any satisfactory account of their numbers, but the whole population to the south of the Tih Mountains, at a liberal computation, cannot be more than 2000 souls. Polygamy and divorce are both practised among the Bedouins, though less frequently than among the Egyptians. Simpler in life and manners, less exposed to corrupting influences than the dwellers in cities, the greater part of them are content with one wife; and the small number of children in each family is a point to which writers have often adverted. Though the number of slaves among the Towerah is not very great, the reason is rather their poverty than any dislike to 'the institution;' and the few who are regarded as men of substance among them, reckon their wealth, like Abraham and the other patriarchs, by their men-servants and maid-servants, as well as by their flocks and herds, because all are alike marketable commodities.

I am indebted to Mr Lieder for information regarding another curious custom prevailing among the Desert tribes, which throws light on a passage of Scripture on which the infidel and libertine have rung the changes '*usque ad nauseam*' as of an immoral tendency. I refer to that episode in the history of David, when, stricken in years, and with vital energy scarce sufficient to keep the blood in circulation, he suffered so extremely from cold that his ministers and physicians deemed it necessary to choose Abishag, the Shunamite, a young maiden full of health, that she might cherish him as a nurse, and lie in his bosom to impart heat to him. This custom prevails among the Arabs to the present day. When a man, through old age, has been reduced to the same helpless and suffering condition in which David was, a young girl is chosen to lie in his bosom, not simply to give him heat, but to "*cherish*" him, as they are aware that though the inhalation of his breath may have a poisonous effect on her health, the inhalation of hers gives new life and vigour to his worn-out frame. I have no doubt those who are learned in the mysteries of carbonic and oxygen gases, can explain the reason philosophically:—the fact of the health of the younger and healthier person being, as it were, stolen to support that of the more aged and sickly, is, I believe, so well established among the medical faculty, that they object to young children being allowed to sleep with persons of advanced age. Hence the prescrip-

tion for the aged king was made in a hygeian point of view, for the prolongation of his valuable life, and not merely for the comfort to be derived from the natural warmth imparted to his withered frame.

As the Arabs have an idea that every Frank has a knowledge of medicine, the Sheikh's daughter, a little girl of two years old, was thrust under the curtain of separation, that I might prescribe for her. She had on a little cotton chemise, with a necklace of sea-shells round her neck, and another precisely similar round the abdomen. Supposing the latter might be an amulet, I inquired, but found they were both worn merely as ornaments. She had had a tumour of some kind on the hip-joint, which had contracted the muscles of the right leg so that she walked lame. I professed my inability to cure her, and suggested that if his tents were in the neighbourhood of Hummam Faraoun, bathing in the hot sulphureous springs might prove beneficial. He then began to complain of asthma himself, and half a dozen others had chronic maladies of some sort, for which they wanted cures; and as my disclaimer of the hakim's art evidently did not receive credit, I was obliged to explain that I had no medicine chest with me, and was sorry to be unable to meet their demands. If a medical missionary were found willing to undertake such a post, his knowledge of medicine would acquire for him an influence which, humanly speaking, no other man could attain; indeed from the impression they entertain about every Frank's being a *hakim*, I should say the knowledge of medicine is an indispensable qualification for this field. As both camel and guide were now waiting, I made the Sheikh a small present of tobacco for himself and the others who had formed the conclave, and at nine o'clock set out for Feiran.

We had made only one turn in this narrow winding valley ere we came upon the first of the gardens for which Wadi Feiran is famous. It contained, within a rude enclosure, a hut used as a storehouse for drying dates, and a considerable number of palm and nubk trees.<sup>1</sup> There was a deep draw-well a few yards from the gate, beside which stood two Arab girls, tending a large flock of goats that were browsing on the herbage thinly scattered over the wadi. They were the first Bedouin women I had seen without the *yashmak*; but in addition to the blue cotton garment, they wore, like the peasant women of Egypt, a shawl or veil of the same stuff, fastened on the crown of the head and hanging down the back, which on our approach they made do

<sup>1</sup> I have never met with this tree in England. De Sauley calls it the lotus tree; and in Italy, where it grows freely, it is called *zizoli*.

duty for it, by pulling it round one side of the face and holding it with their teeth, reminding one of the manner in which the Maltese women use the *faldetta*; and thus defended, they stared at me with as much curiosity as if they had never seen a person in the Frank dress before. One of them wore a bracelet of amber beads of large size on her arm, and I observed that their back hair was brought round to their foreheads and twisted into the shape of a horn, which protruded beyond the head-gear. I had many opportunities afterwards of observing that the Towerah women, old and young, all wear their hair in this unbecoming fashion. A very tiny stream of water flowed down the middle of the wadi, above this garden, insignificant indeed when compared with that which we had seen in Wadi Gherundel, but there were no traces of it farther down, though I did not observe how or where it was absorbed. The sands of the wadi sparkled with grains of yellow metal, which I fancied might be gold dust washed down by the torrents from the mountains. I picked up a considerable quantity, and on my return home sent some of it to England for the purpose of being analysed, but have never received any satisfactory report.

At 10 o'clock we came to a remarkable rocky promontory running into the wadi on the right, at the point where Wadi Aleiat joins it, called Hagar Mahgrug, on which stood the ruins of a convent or castle. All around were scattered the ruins of houses; and not far distant there was an ancient graveyard of large extent; evidently marks of the site of some considerable town in former days. On the mountain side, to the left hand, there were also the ruins of a church and other buildings, probably conventual. This was Feiran, a town of great importance in the fifth and following centuries of our era; being the seat of a bishop and the abode of a considerable Christian population, ere imperial patronage had brought Ghebel Mousa into fashion, and when Serbal was reckoned 'the Mount of God.'<sup>1</sup> The ancient fortress-like building on Hagar Mahgrug, commanding Wadi Feiran to the east and west, and Wadi Aleiat, was doubtless the acropolis, and possibly served also as the episcopal residence. It is built to the height of ten feet from the ground, with rough boulder stones from the valley, and above that there is a more modern construction of mud hardened in the sun. But if Makrizi, the Arab historian, is to be believed, long ages before the Christian era the

<sup>1</sup> For farther particulars regarding the Christian occupation of Feiran, the reader is referred to Dr Robinson's Biblical Researches, vol. i., pp. 186, 187, and to Lepsius' Letters on Egypt, etc.

Amalekites had built a town here. Just on the other side of Wadi Aleiat are the wells and palm groves of Feiran, the regular encampment of the Towerah, and where it had been arranged I should find my own tent pitched on returning from the mountain.

From Wadi Feiran we turned to the right into Wadi Aleiat, which leads directly to the base of Serbal. Leaving the camel here, I proceeded up the valley with the old Bedouin guide, who had associated with himself a young *gillie*, to whose shoulders he had transferred the zimzimieh, while across his own was slung his rusty firelock. They started at the rattling pace of five miles an hour; and between the roughness of the path and the burning heat of the sun, I found it very difficult to keep up with them. In spite of many entreaties to take it a little more leisurely, they maintained this pace until we reached, in a few minutes more than one hour, the entrance to the ravine which separates the easternmost peak of Serbal from the rest of the mountain; so that I should reckon the length of Wadi Aleiat to be about five miles. A turn to the south-west at the entrance completely shuts it in from Wadi Feiran, a ridge of hills running between them. The avalanches of rock and stone which, during the course of ages, have been brought down from the mountains by the winter torrents, have so covered this valley as to suggest the idea, that the clouds must at some period have rained down boulders instead of hailstones; yet it is not deficient in such verdure as this Desert produces, and there are more sant trees than we have yet met with, scattered over the surface. These are the *shittah* trees of Scripture, from the wood of which the Ark of the Covenant, the Cherubim, and the Pillars of the Tabernacle were made; and it is a fact worthy of remark, that while these trees are found here still in considerable numbers, there is not one to be seen, so far as my observation served, in the plain of Er Rahah, or in any of the wadis about Ghebel Mousa. This valley is sufficiently ample to have contained the tents of all the tribes of Israel; and my impression is that from every part of it, the summits of Serbal can be seen, but I am quite certain that from the upper part of it at least the whole mountain is visible. We saw some ruins on the opposite side of the dry torrent-bed, and near them a few black tents, the girls belonging to which were scattered among the rocks, watching the flocks and singing the while. The sound, as borne to us from a distance, was melodious. On boulders of sandstone, or porphyry, we observed at intervals along our course, short inscriptions in the same character as those of Wadi Mokatteb. They appeared to be the names of pilgrims who had visited the mountain,

or marks to direct the paths of shepherds straying through these wilds. On one of them a camel had been roughly scratched beside the other characters.

Serbal does not disappoint one on a near approach to it. Majestic as he seems when you trace his serrated crest towering above all his compeers for days before you reach the base, his presence is still more noble as seen from Wadi Aleiat. There are no outworks or fences, no shoulders or projecting spurs, to detract from his stature or hide his summit, until you have achieved half the ascent; his precipitous sides rise sheer and clear from the rough valley along which we were toiling, like a large three decker from the sea. I perceived at once the force and propriety of that description which is given of the Mount of God, 'the Mount which might be touched!' Some one has most happily described Serbal as 'a series of inverted stalactites.' Between each of the peaks there is a ravine, so steep and narrow, that the ascent through it seems impossible; but to that which separates the easternmost and highest peak of the mountain from the rest, the guide led me, intimating by signs and words, that up its almost perpendicular face we were to make our way. Burckhardt, however, mentions another road, containing flights of steps, which wound round its eastern shoulder till it reached the summit, as that used by the monks and pilgrims in former days. I have no doubt his statement is correct as we fell in with it about a quarter of an hour from the top. At half-past eleven o'clock, after we had entered the ravine, we came to a pool of most delicious water in a cavity of the rock, from which we filled anew our zimzimieh. From the place where we left the camel at the entrance of the wadi to this point, we had had an hour and a half of hard walking, and after a rest of ten minutes we began the ascent of the mountain in good earnest.

My experience in climbing mountains has been considerable, but never have I met with anything to match the ascent of Serbál. There was no beaten path. Sometimes we struck for a few minutes on a track of the gazelle; but for the most part wandered where the guide's eye deemed a passage most practicable. Several times we came to a stand-still before some great mass of rock which stood projecting over the ravine exactly in our way, and round which it was impossible to creep, so there was nothing for it but to climb up its rough sides as best we could, with the disagreeable certainty that a false step or slip of the foot would dash us headlong down the precipice we had been mounting. I know not whether the guide thought he would make the way easier for me by avoiding as much as possible the firm masses of rock, and

choosing loose stones and sand whenever they could be found; but in this way the toil of the ascent was doubled by never getting a sure footing, and by the stones slipping from beneath our feet. After submitting for a time to be thus led, I at last resolved to choose my own path, and found I got on much better by selecting steep but firm masses of rock, and clambering up them with hands and feet, or when they were very slippery, lying down at full length and crawling over them. We took two hours and a half to reach the top of the ravine, where the actual separation of the peaks takes place; but the difficulty of breathing experienced from the rarity of the air was so great, that I was obliged frequently to lie down for five minutes at a time to recover breath during that period. The cleft between the peaks of the mountain runs right through from NE. to SW., and in it we found quantities of wild sage and a considerable supply of water. If this mountain be Sinai, this probably is the place where Aaron and the elders remained while Moses, at Jehovah's call, went up to the top amid thick darkness. After leaving this, we began to ascend the easternmost peak, and had an additional hour of still more dangerous climbing, as it was over the steep, bare, and slippery surface of the granite rock, where there was not a patch of earth or a stone to steady the foot. The only plan was to lie down flat on our breasts, and with arms and feet to hoist the body upwards; but if after such a hoist we failed in getting some crevice or projecting corner by which to anchor with foot or hand, we slipped back with alarming velocity over the ground we had made with such difficulty. It was the ascent of a glacier, only of smooth granite instead of ice.

This last ascent was made on the northern side of the peak; and in the ravines sheltered from the sun's rays we met with thick ice, which, in the state of fusion I was in, proved a most grateful refreshment. About a quarter of an hour from the top we fell in with the stair already referred to, consisting of large pieces of granite laid one above another on the surface of the smooth, slippery rock, for the assistance of pilgrims who once frequented this mountain as a holy place. Though there are gaps in it now, it rendered us great assistance. At the place where we struck into it we had our first view of the Gulf of Suez, with the range of mountains called Ghebel Zeit, on the African shore. As we neared the huge block of grey granite which crowns the summit, the Sinaitic inscriptions again began to appear; and that block itself, with several lying contiguous to it, were covered with them, though many were so defaced that it would be impossible now to copy them. Owing to the way in which these rocks are thrown together,

one or two grottoes are formed, in which people might find shelter. On the narrow plateau at the top there is a circle of loose stones, which Burckhardt has very accurately described as about two feet high and twelve paces in diameter, which may have formed a Druidical ring connected with the worship of Baal, whose name the mountain bears.<sup>1</sup> It was three o'clock when we got there, after three hours and a half of the most fatiguing exertion I ever made in my life, reckoning from the time of leaving the pool at the bottom of the ravine. Though one who has made the ascent might hesitate to undergo the same fatigue a second time, I am certain the unanimous testimony of all who have been there must be, that they would not have missed the panoramic view from the top for any consideration; and I would recommend future travellers by all means to visit it for the sake of the view, even though they may be disposed to reject it as the scene of the giving of the law.

The first impression made on the mind when the wide waste of wilderness is unfolded before us, is one of stupefaction. The view is so extensive, it seems as if we should never be able to master all its details; but gradually wadis and mountains begin to link together in the memory, until we discover that almost the entire Arabian peninsula is mapped out at our feet. But for the more southerly Sinaitic range, which intercepts the view of the Eastern Gulf, we should take in the whole length and breadth of it at a glance, from the head of the Gulf of Suez to the head of the Gulf of Akabah. It is astonishing that neither Burford nor any other of those who cater for the amusement and instruction of the British public have ever thought of having a panorama taken from this mountain top. The extent of scenery which it would embrace, and the variety of shape and stratification, of light and shade, afforded by the mountains and valleys, would render such a painting immensely attractive, independent of the universal interest which attaches to the region as the scene of the forty years' wanderings of the Israelites. While waiting in hope that some enterprising individual may supply this desideratum, it may not be uninteresting to my readers to have an enumeration of the leading features of the landscape.

Let us turn our faces then first to the north; and there, bounding the horizon, we have the chalky range of Ghebel et Tih running right

<sup>1</sup> As there is not a vestige of building on the summit of this peak, I am strengthened in the supposition that these stones may have formed a Druidical ring, by reading the interesting account Mr Porter gives of one he discovered on Mount Hermon.—Five Years in Damascus, vol. i., p. 293.



across the peninsula, and presenting the same variety of colour and stratification as when we first saw it from the roof of the hôtel at Suez. Immediately below it is a wide sandy plain, running in the same direction from W. to E., called Wadi er Ramliéh, or "The Sandy Valley," towards the eastern end of which is the *Ain el Hudrah*, in which name Dr Wilson, I believe, first recognised the Hazeroth of Scripture; while at its western extremity, where Wadi Humor joins it, rise two hills, called Serbout el Ghamel and Serabit el Khadem, on the latter of which are the ancient monuments already referred to. In the same direction, but much nearer and narrower, is the Wadi es Sheikh, a continuation of Wadi Feiran, which runs up to the convent of Ghebel Mousa; and another broad wadi, called Beráh, running from NW. to SE., seems to form the line of communication between the Wadi Ramliéh and it. Turn we next towards the east,—and here, with the exception of Wadi Rim, which runs away from the foot of Serbál in an easterly direction, and an occasional glimpse of Wadi es Sheikh, the eye rests on nothing but mountains, wild, bleak, and piled together in inextricable confusion. We can make out, however, that they are grouped together in three ranges; one to the north, the other two running nearly parallel to each other farther south. The first of these groups is Ghebel Sahl, which rises from the western shore of the Gulf of Akabah, and shuts out the view of the head of the gulf and the fortlet from which it derives its modern name. The names of the more southern are, the range of Ghebel Wateíah, and beyond it what is usually called the Sinaitic range. These two groups seemed closely packed together (as I afterwards found to be the case), and formed the most confused mass of mountain tops that can be imagined. I asked eagerly for Ghebel Mousa, which is generally taken for Mount Sinai, and I confess to a feeling of disappointment when it was pointed out to me. It is considerably lower than its neighbour, Ghebel Katerin; and they are both so surrounded by mountains, that they appeared nothing more than the highest points of a range where all are nearly equal. As there has been some dispute whether Ghebel Mousa could be seen from Serbál, I purposely asked my guide several times the name of the mountain he had first pointed out as it, and always received the same reply; and from the peculiarity of its shape, as I saw it afterwards from Wadi Beráh and Ghebel et Tih, I am convinced he was perfectly correct.

To the south there was in sight, a portion of the Red Sea, with the mountains of Ghebel Garib and Ghebel es Zeit on the African coast, and between Serbál and the sea a long sandy plain called Wadi el

Káa, which begins at the place where Wadi Feiran leaves the sea, and runs down to the southernmost point of the peninsula. This plain is separated from the seashore by a range of low hills, the eastern part of which is called Ghebel Hummam, from warm baths named after Moses in the immediate neighbourhood of Tûr. On this mountain there are many Sinaitic inscriptions. Far down towards the south-east, in the middle of this broad plain of el Káa, my guide pointed out a curious pyramidal hill called Ghebel Nakus or "The Bell Mountain," from the ringing sound made by the sand as it rushes over the rocks, one of the natural curiosities of the Desert. In a wadi on this side, which runs down from the mountain to the plain of el Káa, there is a ruined convent called Deir Sigillyeh, which is not visible from this peak. If we turn now to the west, the continuous view of the Red Sea is interrupted by the other peaks of this mountain; but it is seen both below and above the Ghebel Hummam Faraoun, with the ranges of Ghebel Zaffaraneh and Abou Deraj on its western shore. I was able to trace my whole route from Ghebel Hummam Faraoun with the most perfect accuracy, including the Nakhb el Budrah, and Wadis Murkhah, Mokatteb, Nátet, and Feiran. Such are the outlines of the panorama which Serbál offers to those who will take the trouble to climb its inhospitable sides.

To me, however, there was something more attractive in that desolate mountain top than the view. From previous study of the subject (which subsequent personal observation has confirmed), I made my pilgrimage there under the impression that it is *the* Mount Sinai; that on this, or one of the neighbouring peaks, Jehovah spake with Moses from out of the cloud, and gave him the law, both moral and ceremonial, for a testimony in Israel; and that the Wadi Aleiat is that portion of the wilderness of Sinai where the tribes were gathered. Leaving my guides, I sought shelter from the piercing blast under the venerable granite block which crowns the summit, that I might meditate a while, not only on that scene, so terrible that it caused Moses to exclaim, 'I do exceedingly fear and quake,' but also on Paul's allegory, in which he likens Mount Sinai in Arabia to Hagar the bondswoman, and Jerusalem above to Sarah the mother of the free. It was a solemn thing, too, sitting on that spot, to realize the fact, that the terrible majesty in which God appeared on Sinai as the Lawgiver, was but an emblem and foreshadowing of His yet more glorious and terrible appearing when He comes as the Law-avenger, 'when every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him.' Happy they to whom in that day

the Lord Jesus is 'the end of the law for righteousness,' because they believe in Him.

I would gladly have remained hours on the top of Serbál, but the cold was so intense, that, before I had been there much more than half an hour, my hands became so benumbed that I could not use my pencil, while my teeth chattered as in a fit of ague, and the fear of being laid up in the Desert with fever compelled me to retreat. After one more survey of the grandest but most desolate scenery to be found on the earth's surface, I shared my lunch with the poor shivering guides, and began the descent. On coming to the slippery granite incline, I assumed a sitting position, and slid as cautiously as possible down to the cleft between the peaks, coming off with no greater damage than the destruction of my nether garments. But here the worst part of the descent began; for, it being too rough to slide, and too precipitous to run, we had to reach the pool at the bottom by a series of leaps from one rock to another, a process which caused every joint to ache. The descent, from the summit to the pool at the bottom of the ravine, occupied an hour and a half. During our descent we started a brace of red-legged partridges, which the Arabs call *Chenar*, some of which I had already seen in Wadi Mokatteb and Wadi Feiran.

We had another hour and a half's walk before us ere we could reach the tents. It was already a quarter past five, and in another half hour the last remnant of daylight would disappear; so we hastened on, and luckily got out of the gorge at the bottom of the ravine ere darkness closed over our path. The pilgrim doing penance with peas in his shoes is child's play compared with the agony of walking, when footsore, over the loose angular stones of Wadi Aleiat; but, to make matters worse, my guides strayed from the goats' path by which we had ascended, and were obliged to follow the dry bed of the torrent to find the mouth of the wadi, so that it was a quarter past eight before I got to my tent, utterly exhausted, and bruised with several severe falls I had sustained by stumbling over rocks in the darkness. In consequence of losing our way, we had taken double the time to descend the wadi which was occupied in its ascent, and, with the exception of half an hour's rest on the summit, had undergone ten hours of incessant toil from the time of leaving the camel until we got back to the tents. Shaheen had begun to get seriously alarmed at our long absence, and was just despatching Nassar with the *fanoos* in search of us when we arrived.

The peak we ascended is the same which Burckhardt visited; and, on

consulting his travels after my return to Europe, I found his description of it very accurate. The Bedouins who live in Feiran declare that it is the highest of all the peaks, but its exact elevation has never yet been ascertained. Ruppell, however, made the ascent of the second peak from the west, and, imagining it to be the highest, gives its height as 6342 Paris feet above the level of the Red Sea, which, according to Dr Robinson, makes it 1700 feet lower than Ghebel Katerin. But, even granting Ghebel Katerin the advantage of a few hundred feet over the highest point of Serbál, it must be remembered that, rising as the latter does from a far lower level—standing completely isolated from all the surrounding mountains, and presenting the most striking and magnificent outline as seen from all quarters of the peninsula—it is emphatically *the* mountain of the Desert.

During my absence a Bedouin had come to beg a little brandy for his father, who was very ill, and had brought a present of some goat's milk. He had waited my return quietly for hours, as he had nothing better to do. I gave him the brandy, though I had not much faith either in his story or its curing properties. I had long promised my Arabs a sheep to make a feast when we got to Wadi Feiran, and had left orders in the morning with Shaheen to purchase one. On asking after my return if they had had their feast, I was told that the sheep had been bought, but that those for whose benefit it was intended had unanimously requested that it might not be killed till the following night, when we should be again alone in the Desert, as no less than ten of their neighbours, on hearing that a sheep had been purchased, had come up, expecting a share in the feast. In accordance with the laws of hospitality, they must have entertained these self-invited guests, and then what was intended for them would have been devoured by their friends. Shaheen told me they had been making loud complaints of having had their corn and beans pilfered by their brethren at Heshuéh, and were glad to get away. I suspect that those who are accustomed to conduct English and American parties have many such demands made on them by their less fortunate neighbours.

*January 27.*—There was much fighting and quarrelling again this morning among the Arabs about the loading of the camels, I suppose by way of display before their kinsmen, as no new article had been added to their respective loads. I had now grown accustomed to these ebullitions, and made use of the time thus wasted in visiting the wells, and walking among the gardens of Feiran, most of which are enclosed, and contain almond and nubk trees, as well as palms. It is

an oasis in the Desert, and, with a little ingenuity in constructing reservoirs, might be made a flourishing place. We got in motion about nine o'clock, and proceeded for several miles through groves of palm trees, resembling in size and verdure those we had seen on the banks of the Nile. For more than two hours and a half we travelled among these gardens, which are cultivated for the Saliwah by a tribe of the Ghebelayeh called the *Tibna*, who receive a certain amount of the produce. We also passed many Bedouin tents, and, about a quarter of an hour above the wells, the modern burying-ground of Feiran, which seemed thickly tenanted. We passed the mouth of Wadi Séyeh at 10.40, and of Wadi Achdar at 11.10, both to our left. At 11.35 we took leave of Wadi Feiran, and, passing between two immense blocks of granite called Ubeiss, which form a natural barrier, entered Wadi es Sheikh, which is just a continuation of the former, leading up to Ghebel Mousa. About this place the Wadi Saláf stretches out to the right, running towards the southern flank of Serbál, and half an hour further on, another wadi called Suáween runs in the same direction. Serbál bears SW. from Wadi es Sheikh, all its five peaks being visible. Again the granite mountains on either side of the valley were intersected by dykes of trap and porphyry, like those already described in the lower part of Wadi Feiran.

At 1.30 we passed to the left Wadi Macshisbeh, and came in sight of Ghebel Beráh, by the base of which we afterwards passed on the way from Ghebel Mousa to Nukhl, and at 2.10 on the same side Wadi Lúbar and Ghebel Rufied. Wadi es Sheikh is destitute both of palm trees and gardens: now and then we passed groups of tarfa trees; but, generally speaking, its vegetation consists in the thinly scattered shrubs so familiar in the Desert. Shortly after passing the mouth of Wadi Lúbar, we left the Wadi es Sheikh, and turned to the right into Wadi Shuref es Saháb, in order to reach Ghebel Mousa by a shorter way through the Nakhb el Howá, or 'Pass of the Wind.' The baggage camels are generally sent round by the Wadi es Sheikh, and there was some discussion between Shaheen and the men whether our kafilah was to be broken up or not; but I fancy the prospect of the feast in the evening gave unanimity to their counsels, for in a much shorter time than usual, it was settled that men and baggage were all to proceed by the Nakhb el Howá. Up this Wadi Saháb we journeyed for two hours more, pursuing a course a very little east of south, and having the black range of Ghebel Wateifah before us, of which the said Nakhb is a defile, until we halted for the night at half-past four o'clock. After the tents were pitched, Nassar directed my attention

to a single blue peak seen through the cleft of the pass, and informed me that that was Ghebel Mousa. With the exception of Wadi Sa-beiyah, at the eastern base of Ghebel Mousa, there is not another point in all that region, mountain-tops excepted, from which the top of Ghebel Mousa can be seen. I was therefore glad to get this view of it from the plain; and, filling up the back ground of the pass of Howá, its pointed summit, now tipped with crimson, now with purple, and finally assuming a cold, leaden hue, as the red glare faded from the western sky, was very imposing.

The poor sheep purchased yesterday had followed us all day of its own accord, without requiring halter or leader. When it loitered behind to brouse on the shrubs, a peculiar cry which the Arabs use for their flocks, *Err, Err, Err*, was all that was necessary to entice it on; and all unconscious of its fate, bleating and rushing among the camels' feet, it kept trotting by our side. The sight of it, running thus of its own accord to meet death, more than once unmanned me during the day—emblem as it was of Him, who, with his own free consent, for our sake, 'was led as a sheep to the slaughter.' I suggested several times that it should be slaughtered at once, but this did not meet with approval. Before we alighted from the camel I found out the reason. Shaheen intended to act butcher himself, as he wished to have his share in the feast, and yet would not on any consideration eat meat which had been killed by the Bedouins, for reasons which I have already referred to. I asked if he uttered a prayer when he killed the animal. He said it was not a prayer, but a thanksgiving, in which they acknowledged Allah as the giver of all good. He added that, according to their religion, the knife with which the animal is struck must be so sharp as to produce death by a single blow, as it is unlawful to strike twice. This accounts for the barbarous way in which we had seen him kill a fowl before reaching Suez. I found he put Christians in the same category with the Bedouins, as he asserted no Mohammedan would eat meat killed by them; but he lauded the Jews as particularly careful in their way of killing, adding that a Mus-sulman would eat meat killed by them without any scruple. The conversation ended with an injunction that the sheep was not to be killed near the tents. On my return from a stroll, in which I had been attempting to sketch Ghebel Mousa, I was astonished to hear that the sheep was not only killed, but skinned, and already in process of being cooked. The servants took possession of one quarter for themselves, and left the rest to the Arabs, who devoured the whole at one sitting. Shortly after I went to see how they were enjoying

themselves, and was overwhelmed with greetings of *Kateir Herug Howajee*. The Sheikh invited me to the place of honour on his sheepskin before the fire, which I occupied for a few minutes, though with misgivings of carrying away more than I brought. They were roasting a part of the flesh in the embers in the same way in which they bake their bread, as already described, while every pan which Shaheen could spare, and even my wash-hand basin, had been pressed into service to boil the rest. Thoroughly satisfied for once in their lives, they wound up the evening by another dance at my tent door.

*January 28.*—I left our encampment in Wadi Saháb this morning at 7.45, and walked on alone, having the start of the káfileh by half-an-hour. A well-beaten camel's track leads up to the Nakb by which we were to pass. At 8.30 I passed on a rising ground many graves of ancient date, different in appearance from those of the Arabs, as well as from the cairns in Wadi Nátet. About ten minutes later many more of the same character were seen on the edge of a steep bank, just before descending into Wadi el Túr, evidences that at some former period there must have been a considerable population in this neighbourhood, though there seems no mention made by previous travellers of any town having existed here. Wadi el Túr is narrow but very deep, and seems to run from NNE. to S. West. A path leads down it direct to Túr el Bahr. When our party got into it, they met one of the Pasha's Kavasses on his way from Túr to Ghebel Mousa, who had been obliged to abandon his camel many miles below, and was trudging on foot, ready to sink under the weight of his capote and saddle-bags. He begged our men to give him a place on the camels, otherwise he would be obliged to sleep out another night ere he could reach Ghebel Mousa. He was in a piteous plight, having already slept four nights in the open air, and been 24 hours without food; and he seemed very grateful when we supplied his wants, and brought him on with us to the barracks of an Egyptian regiment stationed near the convent. After climbing up the steep eastern bank of this wadi, I was astonished to find on both sides of the road extensive burying-grounds, some containing ancient graves, others evidently used by the modern Bedouins. While still wondering at the existence of so extensive a necropolis in such a desert place, I suddenly descried on my path traces of a ruined town. There was a large square enclosure, with a well in the middle of it, which may have been the site of a church, while there are extensive ruins of habitations on both sides of it. These are at the very mouth of the pass. There is no trace of modern dwelling or of cultivation in the neighbourhood.

The modern graves may be those of the Ghebelayeh or Arab servitors of the convent ; but to whom did the ruined town with its ancient grave-yards belong ? When the Bishops of Feiran assumed the title of Bishops of Sinai, can this town have owed its origin to the change ? I am astonished that travellers so observant and accurate as Drs Robinson and Wilson should have passed by this route and made no mention of these ruins.

The pass was longer but not so difficult as that of Budrah, though there were some places in it which tested the strength of the camels pretty severely ; and one of them fell, causing a long delay. I walked on through the pass with Hanna as my aid in case of attack, and found it by no means difficult. A portion of the path, about a mile above the ruins, is paved with large flags, after the manner of the old Roman roads. Some stunted palm trees grew in the dry bed of the torrent, and several Sinaitic inscriptions were found on the granite blocks by the way side, one of which I copied while waiting for the camels to overtake us with the zimzimieh. Some travellers describe the route as one full of difficulty and danger ; but for my part I found, in the good gravelled path which ran along nearly its whole length, the first traces of civilization since I entered the wilderness.

At 12 o'clock we had gained the eastern mouth of the Nakh el Howá, and here a magnificent mountain view presented itself. Before us lay the Wadi er Rahah, 'The Valley of Rest,' where modern travellers place the encampment of the Israelites. Right opposite was Ghebel Safsáfah, which Dr Robinson considers Horeb, the place where God spake in the hearing of Israel ; but Ghebel Mousa, the Sinai of monkish tradition, *is neither visible from this point nor any other in the plain.* On the right was a group of high hills called Ghebel Salzalzéit, and on the left Ghebel Furéis. From some Bedouin shepherd girls, who were on the other side of a ravine, I learned the names of the mountains around us, or rather ascertained that I was correct in the names I assigned to them, because the general topography of the wadi was already familiar to my mind. I own, however, that the glowing description given by some travellers of the landscape, as seen from the top of this pass, had raised expectations doomed to disappointment. As we descended into the wadi we met a caravan coming from the convent, which is not visible from the pass. It was composed of an Englishman, a Frenchman, their Dragoman and Bedouin attendants, who were on their way to Túr to embark on board the Englishman's yacht, which was in waiting for them there. We exchanged a *bonjour*, but passed on without any conversation. During



the forty days I spent in the Desert, these were the only Europeans I met with. We found that Wadi er Rahah slopes for about half its distance in a north-westerly direction towards the range of Watéyah, through which we had just penetrated by Howá, while the other half slopes towards Safsáfeh. Near the water-shed we passed a spring of fresh water, set in a very narrow margin of grass, which, under proper management, might be made to fertilize a considerable portion of the valley. As we got farther down the wadi, the view became more extensive. The Wadi el Lejáh, which runs up to the foot of Ghebel Katerin, opened up on the right hand, and Wadi es Sheikh on the left; while straight before us—a continuation of Wadi Er Rahah—lay the narrow Wadi Shueib, or ‘Valley of Jethro,’ with the Convent of St Catherine at its upper extremity. Ghebel Monejah forms the back ground, and Ghebel el Deir on the left, and Safsáfeh and its dependencies on the right, its flank defences. As a foreground to this scene of mountain solitude and grandeur, and as a contrast to the monotony and inactivity of monastic life, there lay between us and the convent a temporary barrack, occupied by a regiment of Egyptian soldiers, and a small village of mud huts containing their wives and other relatives, who usually migrate with them, though often exposed to severe privations and cruelties on the part of the authorities. The sight of these buildings, though of the rudest possible description, and the presence of so large a population at least one step above the Bedouins in civilization, rendered it difficult to realize that we were still in the heart of the Desert, and at the foot of a mountain which tradition for nine centuries has pointed out as the ‘Mount of God.’

From several English gentlemen who had lodged in the convent during the two years previous to my visit, I had received advice to lodge in my own tent at Ghebel Mousa, as, owing to the number of travellers now passing this way, the ancient hospitality of the monks of St Catherine had given way to the keenest avarice. This advice I adopted; and accordingly we encamped at the foot of a hill called Ghebel Haroun, at the point where the four wadis, Er Rahah, Shueib, el Lejáh, and es Sheikh meet. I afterwards learned that Abbas Pasha had encamped with his suite on this very spot during his visit to the Desert the year before, and had remained in it for two or three months. We had scarcely time to pitch our tents, and get their interior ‘fixings’ in order, before the officer commanding the Egyptian troops, Colonel Ibrahim Effendi Bey, came with his secretary to pay me a visit. The Colonel being guiltless of the knowledge of any European language, and my stock of Arabic being altogether inade-

quate to maintain a general conversation, Shaheen's services were called in as interpreter. He then asked whence I came, and required our passports to be shown him, as he had the strictest orders from the Pasha to see that all travellers have their passports properly *viséed*; and he begged that, before starting, I would send him my passport for his signature, which of course I did, though in order to enter Palestine it is of no use. He examined with the greatest curiosity my folding-up bed, and praised it greatly. At last, having brought his interrogatory to an end, I began mine,—pipes and coffee having in the meantime been supplied. Did he not find it very dull in these out-of-the-way mountainous quarters? Eiwallah! dull enough; but time passed, as he had a great deal to do. How long did he expect still to be in banishment here? For other six months, till the palace the Pasha was building on Ghebel Tineh was completed. The Pasha had given positive orders that it was to be ready by the month of June, as he was coming to occupy it. I asked next, how many men he had under his command here? There were 1800 here at Ghebel Mousa; but there were 3000 more, working night and day, constructing a road between Túr and the new palace, as that also must be ready for the Pasha's use in June. I was much pleased with the gentlemanly bearing, the smartness, and intelligence of Colonel Ibrahim Bey: he was such a contrast to all the vulgar pot-bellied Pashas, Colonels, etc., I had seen with the troops in Egypt. I took him to be a man about forty years of age, and, barring the red slippers and fez, he was dressed altogether in European style. I made him a present of some cigars; and Shaheen insisted on his waiting until he had made some sherbet for him, which the Colonel evidently drank with considerable relish, without arousing any suspicion on my part that he was disobeying the laws of the Prophet by quaffing strong drink in the tent of an infidel! He complimented Shaheen on his excellent sherbet, and immediately took leave. Knowing the soldier's taste, Shaheen had prepared him a tumbler of brandy and water, well sweetened with sugar. He had scarcely returned to his tent ere he sent a soldier with a present of half a dozen mandarin oranges, which were exceedingly delicious.

Though I had not taken up my abode in the convent, a dollar had been paid to the Greek convent at Cairo for a letter of introduction; so I resolved to visit it, and have a conversation with the *Padres*. Passing the barracks, I proceeded up the Wadi Shueib, and soon came to the convent garden to the NW. of the pile. It was pleasant once more to see the almond, the orange, and the pomegranate, with

the dark cypresses, and the tall, bare poplars, in so unlikely and barren a spot. It is surrounded by a high wall, and within its enclosure is the grotto in which the bodies of the fraternity who have departed this life are deposited, after having undergone a baking process to dry up the flesh. As I have often seen such humiliating exhibitions in the Capuchin convents of Sicily, I should not probably have visited this place, even had my relations with the monks been more amicable than the sequel will show they turned out to be. The convent had all the appearance of a beleaguered fortress. No door or opening of any kind was to be seen on the ground floor, the great door being walled up; but at the height of 30 feet from the ground there is a window with a pulley attached above it, such as one sees from the upper storey of a warehouse in one of our great mercantile towns at home. Half a dozen of the Ghebelayeh, who had been lying idly around the walls, now began to shout loudly to attract the attention of the monks; and, after the lapse of ten minutes, one or two heads at last appeared at the opening above. They asked if we had a letter, and, on being answered in the affirmative, let down a rope with a basket attached, in which the missive was deposited, drawn up, and taken to the superior. While that worthy was examining the letter, a brisk conversation was carried on between one of the lay brethren, Signor Petros, and Shaheen, in modern Greek, of which I could only make out a word now and then. At last, addressing me in Italian, he asked where my camels and baggage were, and if I were not coming to the convent? I replied that I had pitched my tent below, and that my motive in now coming was to pay a friendly visit to the monks, and to see the church. Signor Petros upon this became somewhat insolent in tone and manner, assured me that all travellers came there to lodge, and that I had done *molto male* in not coming as others did.

In the meantime, permission came from the superior that the stranger might enter; but, as I came without baggage, the swing in the air, described by so many travellers as their mode of entrance, was dispensed with, and I was told to come round to a postern in the back wall. It was about four feet in height, having a door well clamped with iron, and set in masonry of great strength, so that it could long defy any assault by the Arabs. Petros met us here, and conducted us through such intricacies of inner doors, winding passages, flights of stairs upwards, and flights of stairs downwards, as convinced me that, even if the Bedouins should find an entrance by the postern, it would be impossible for them to thread their way

through the interior labyrinth. From a court in the centre of the pile we mounted to the storey from which the basket descends, which seems appropriated to the Ghebelayeh, who are servants and dependents of the convent, as a number of them were congregated there. Another flight of stairs brought us to a second storey, which is inhabited by some of the monks. Several were moving about here, with whom I exchanged salutations. Their dress is a gown of dark checked cotton, thickly wadded, over which a long loose robe of dark-blue cloth is worn. A black beaver hat, without a rim, is stuck fast upon the head; and a long beard, hanging down in front, forms an equilibrium to the long, uncombed locks of hair which flow down their backs. They were chiefly young men, with melancholy countenances, singularly destitute of intellectual expression; but their sallow complexions and sunken eyes seemed to indicate that the climate is by no means salubrious. A few of these men are from Greece; but the majority are Bulgarians, Servians, and Russians, unable to speak any language but their own. Another flight of stairs brought us to the strangers' apartments, on the NW. side of the convent, which were built about eight years ago. I was ushered into a small square chamber looking into the court, furnished with a table and broad divan with cushions round the wall, and was soon seated with Signor Petros by my side, who thus began:—

‘All travellers come here, and we make them as comfortable as we can, why then have you not done as they do?’

‘Signor Petros, I have a tent of my own,’ I replied, ‘and find myself perfectly comfortable in it; why then should I seek other lodgings?’

‘You must come to the convent for protection,’ continued Don Petros; ‘it is not safe to remain in the tent at the bottom of the wadi.’

‘I am not afraid! I am under the protection of my own Sheikh and his followers, who are answerable for my safety; besides, I am encamped so near a regiment of the Pasha’s soldiers, that, if an attack were made on me, I should call them to my assistance.’

‘But *why* did you not do as all travellers have done?’ was the next inquiry. ‘Have you ever been here before?’

‘No, Signor, I never was here before; but travellers who have been here advised me to live in my own tent, and, as I like the kind of life, I have followed their advice.’

‘We are in the habit of providing for the wants of travellers,’ he further insisted, ‘and you might as well spend what you do at Mount Sinai in the convent as elsewhere.’

‘If I required provisions, I should have been glad to purchase them from the convent ; but I have brought enough with me to serve all the way to Jerusalem, and shall therefore require to buy nothing but water.’

Finding that my resolution was not to be shaken, the attack ceased, and the conversation took a general turn. He had been himself thirteen years in the convent, and had enjoyed good health. During that time (in 1845) the superior had been removed to another convent in Greece, but had lately returned to his old quarters. He told me he remembered Padre Wilson very well, and had accompanied him to some of the localities in the neighbourhood. From him I learned the particulars given above about the travellers I met in the forenoon near the Nakb el Howá ; as also, that the two English gentlemen who were in advance of me at Suez, had left the convent, on the morning before my arrival, for Nukhl, on the way to Petra. Coffee and anise-seed *liqueur* were brought in by a lay brother ; and a priest, who told me he had formerly been a painter, but had retired from the world in disgust, made his appearance at the same time. He seemed an intelligent man, and spoke Italian admirably, and we had a good deal of conversation, principally about the daguerreotype, which he had seen in operation in the Frenchman’s hands that morning for the first time. He wished to know which discovery took the greatest amount of thought and labour, the steam-engine or the daguerreotype ? I told him the question would make a famous one for a debating society, and that, though there could be no comparison between the importance of the two inventions to mankind, the daguerreotype might have cost its inventor as great an amount of thought and anxiety as the steam-engine had done to Watt. His own preference was decidedly on the side of steam. From the window of the room the leaden roof of the Church of the Transfiguration was a prominent object, and the priest said he had just come from performing vespers there ; upon which I expressed a great desire to visit it, if they would have the goodness to conduct me thither. We immediately left the room, as I hoped to go to the church, but not so.

‘You must first go and visit the superior,’ said Petros, ‘and be sure you ask permission to buy bread and any other things you need.’

I told him again that I needed nothing ; but if it was a trouble for the superior to receive a stranger’s visit, or if he could only be approached as a *bottegaio*, I begged that he might not be disturbed.

‘*Venite, Venite.*’ was his only reply ; and, leading the way up an-

other flight of stairs, apparently about the middle of the convent, we came to the superior's rooms.

He was at supper, though it was only four o'clock; but immediately rose and came into the audience-chamber, a little room with white-washed walls, miserably furnished, without books or any vestige of mental culture. Judging from his appearance, I should take the superior to be a man of about sixty years of age; he was portly in figure and of active gait, with a venerable white beard, and a bright, dark, restless eye. I was seriously annoyed at interrupting the old man at his meal, as I had nothing of importance to communicate; and, but for the obstinacy of Petros, might have seen the church while he supped in peace. I therefore made many apologies for the intrusion. Being seated, the superior led the conversation at once to foreign news. He wanted to know what was doing in Egypt and where the Pasha was, but especially to hear the tidings from Europe. The good fathers, I found, were in a state of happy ignorance regarding the hostilities which had broken out in the East, and would not believe that war between Russia and Turkey had actually begun. I told him of the barbarities committed by the Russian fleet at Sinope, and that an allied English and French fleet was at the mouth of the Dardanelles for the protection of Turkey. He then asked if I knew whether there were many travellers this season in Egypt who intended coming by the Desert? I told him I believed, from what I heard in Cairo, that if the Arabs remained peaceable, there would be several travellers during the spring months. The superior was very affable, and shone in contrast with the *brusquerie* of the lay brother. After another private conversation in Greek between them, Petros, assuming an air of much importance, turned to me and said,—

*Senti Signore!* since you are ignorant of the rules established here, I will now inform you. No one can ascend any of the mountains here except by our permission, and our charges are as follows:—‘For a monk to accompany you, one dollar a day; for an Arab to carry some refreshments, seven piastres a day; and for the refreshments you must pay extra. The money for the Arabs you must not pay into their own hands, but to the brother who is porter, who will take charge of its distribution.’ This fully confirmed what I had been told regarding the inn-keeping propensities of the community. I therefore replied: ‘I make no objection to pay for the company of a monk, provided you will send one along with me who can speak French, Italian, or German, but if you send one who can only speak Bulgarian or Russe, he is of no use to me, and I will not pay for such an encumbrance.’

‘We cannot send such a monk,’ Petros said, shaking his head; ‘but I will proceed now to tell you the places to be seen on Ghebel Mousa—the Virgin’s chapel, and Elijah’s chapel, and a ruined chapel and mosque on the summit.’

‘Excuse me,’ I replied, ‘I don’t care for these things in the least. What I want is a man who will point out the mountains and wadis to me, and give me their names correctly.’

‘Oh!’ said Petros, ‘that is the Arabs’ business; we have nothing whatever to do with that.’

‘Very well, I will pay for the Arab and refreshments since such is your custom; but I beg you to understand that, if you send a monk who cannot speak one of the languages I have mentioned, I will not pay for him.’

‘They must all go together,’ was his *ultimatum*; ‘and if you don’t take the monk you cannot have the Ghebelaiyeh and the refreshments.’

‘As you please!’ was my rejoinder; and, having exchanged salutations with the Superior, I withdrew. I now pressed to be taken to the church, as the shades of evening were beginning to close in, and supposed we were on our way, when, lo! I was ushered into the store-room of the convent, and pressed to buy all manner of things—bread, anise-seed liqueur, skins of dates, walking-sticks from the palms at Elim, rods from the almond tree, dignified with the name of Moses’ rods, and little tin boxes filled with manna,<sup>1</sup> a gum which in autumn exudes from the *tárfa* tree, extensively used in England as a gentle aperient for children. The priest had joined us again; and as Petros pressed upon my notice the various wares, he joined in urging that I should take a box of the latter, as it was the identical manna with which God had fed the Israelites for 40 years in this wilderness. I asked him where this manna came from? He said, ‘from the *tarfa* trees.’ ‘Do you get it all the year round?’ ‘No; only in the summer months.’ ‘Then it cannot be the manna on which the Israelites fed.’ He asked me if it was not an extraordinary thing that the *tarfa* grew nowhere but in this wilderness? I told him that was a mistake, as it grew freely in Italy; only the climate there was not sufficiently warm to produce the gum, or perhaps not sufficient for the life of the insect which is said to puncture the bark of the tree. Still he insisted it was the true manna. At last I told him, if he would look at the Bible, he would find that Moses there expressly stated that

<sup>1</sup> For an account of the way in which this manna is prepared, see Burckhardt, ‘Travels in Syria,’ p. 600.

the manna for the Israelites fell from heaven all the year round, while this exuded from a tree for a few months in summer only; and how, then, could he maintain that this was the same? He began to deny that there was any such statement in Scripture, when Petros interrupted him with the assurance that such was the fact. I declined the manna, but bought a small skin of dates as a remembrance of the convent.

Once more I urged my desire to visit the church, but was told that it would be now quite dark within, and that the visit had better be deferred till next day. I was much annoyed at this, as, on account of its antiquity, I should have liked to get a view of the interior; but perceiving very plainly that they were out of humour because I had not taken up my abode with them, I resolved to content myself with the view I had had of its exterior, and of the mosque which stands close by, and not to trouble them again. The church is said to have been built by the Emperor Justinian A.D. 527, though the language of his contemporary Procopius would lead to the conclusion that the church built by the Emperor was probably in the cleft of the mountain above, and that the present convent was the fortress which he built at the foot of it, and which was turned to its present use at a later period.

It was too late when I left the convent to think of ascending Ghebel Monéjah; besides, I had to return Ibrahim Bey's visit, so we descended along the garden wall to the barracks. I found him seated near his door giving orders to some of his men. He immediately rose and led the way into a mud hut, distinguished in no way from those around in outward appearance. It contained but one room about ten feet square and seven feet high. About three feet from the door there was a divan formed of dry mud, raised half a foot above the level of the ground without, occupying the whole of the rest of the chamber, which was covered with a rich Persian rug. Coffee and chibouks having been handed round by his servants, he asked me if I had seen the convent, and how I liked it? Shaheen then recounted very fully the conversation between myself and the monks. I asked him if it was true, as asserted by Petros, that the mountains around were under their guardianship, and that no one could ascend them without their permission? He replied at once that no such right existed—that the whole peninsula was under the government of the Pasha of Egypt—and that strangers were free to go where they pleased here, as in other parts of his dominions. He moreover offered, if I chose, to give me one of his soldiers as an escort, adding that, in that case, he would like to see who dared to find fault with me. I accepted his offer as



frankly as it was made, assuring him that the poor Ghebeláiyeh should not be a sufferer, but that I was determined to resist the imposition of a monkish guide unless he could be of use. It was arranged that the *Haskár* should come down to my tent next morning, and that he should be at my service as long as I remained and had need of him. Very near where our tents were pitched there is a well of excellent water, about thirty feet deep. It is evidently of ancient date, but was only discovered about a year ago, when the Pasha was residing here, and the earth with which it had been stopped up was excavated. The sides are lined with roughly dressed stones, and originally a flight of steps led down to the bottom, only three or four of which now remain entire.

*January 29.*—At an early hour I was aroused from my slumbers by a most peculiar sound coming from the convent, caused, as I afterwards learned, by beating a log of wood violently, and with great rapidity, with a bar of iron or wood. The Mohammedans, having a horror for bells, will not permit them to be used by Christians, and this is the substitute which the latter are compelled to adopt instead. It was the Sabbath morning, and this was the call to morning mass. Fallen and corrupt as the Greek Church is, there was something peculiarly touching in the thought that, but for this convent, there would not be even the semblance of a witness for Christ throughout all the region of Arabia! But whatever of romance attaches to it vanishes, when we reflect that from this retreat Christianity has given forth absolutely nothing of an ameliorating or elevating tendency to the semi-barbarous and semi-pagan tribes in its neighbourhood. Habits of industry, the construction of fixed habitations, and the arts of agriculture, bear a humble rank indeed among the blessings which the religion of Christ brings in its train; yet even these, which in the experience of the missionary early develop themselves in the rudest savages after their conversion, are sought in vain, not only among the Towerah tribes in general, but among the immediate dependents of the convent itself. This wooden bell summons no native population to the house of prayer. As the manual labour of the monks is confined to their own gardens, so the spiritual exercises are confined within their own convent walls. The salt, alas! has lost its savour, and how can others be salted? They not only make no aggressive movement on the Mohammedo-heathenism around, but they have been unable to conserve the nominal Christianity delivered into their hands. 'When Justinian built this convent,' said the Superior to Dr Robinson, 'he sent 200 Wallachian prisoners,

and ordered the Governor of Egypt to send 200 Egyptians, to be the vassals of the monastery, to serve and protect it. In process of time, as the Arabs came in and deprived the convent of many of its possessions, *the descendants of these vassals became Moslems, and adopted the Arab manners.* These serfs are under the entire and exclusive control of the convent, to be sold or punished, or even put to death, as it may determine.<sup>1</sup> Established for centuries in the heart of the peninsula—possessing rights in virtue of ancient charters—and having a numerous tribe under their control—what advantages for educating and Christianizing the Bedouins are thus deliberately neglected and thrown away!

I had a visit this morning from the colonel's secretary, accompanied by the surgeon of the regiment, a Coptish Christian from Cairo, Dr Yousouf Canaan; but wishing to spend the Sabbath quietly on the top of Ghebel Mousa, I got rid of them as early as I could by inviting them to come and visit me on the morrow. The Egyptian haskar had been in attendance since daylight, so giving him the zimzimieh and saddle-bag containing a few biscuits, and taking Shaheen with me, I set out for the mountain. A well-made carriage road has, by the Pasha's orders, been carried along the outlying hills, about half way to the summit, or rather, to speak with exactitude, nearly to its base; for a group of high hills lie between it and the convent and plain of er Rahah, at the back of which, and altogether distinct from them, rises Ghebel Mousa.

If this be indeed the Sinai of Scripture, it had a very narrow escape from a desecration of a novel and curious kind the year before I visited it (1853). It appears that the Pasha's visit to this mountainous region was on account of his health, his physicians having advised a change to a cooler temperature than the banks of the Nile, in order to get rid of an obstinate attack of illness. He had not been long encamped among these mountains till he experienced a cure, and resolved at once to have a palace built for himself on Ghebel Mousa. With all the recklessness of an eastern despot, whose word is law, he gave orders that the work should be begun forthwith, and that the palace should be ready for him by the month of June of the following year, as he would then come to take possession of it.<sup>2</sup> Such a stir as fol-

<sup>1</sup> See Robinson's 'Biblical Researches,' vol. i., p. 200, and note 18th, at the end of the volume. Also Burekhardt's 'Travels in Syria.'

<sup>2</sup> Abbas never set foot in his new palace. A month or two before the time he had fixed, he died suddenly—murdered, there is little room to doubt, by his own attendants, who decamped after plundering everything they could lay their hands on. It was said he was hated by his servants for his cruelty.

lowed this lonely Desert had probably never witnessed since the Israelites took their departure from it. In order to building operations, the first preliminary, of course, was a road for the conveyance of materials; and his Highness' engineers were set to work to plan, and regiments of his soldiers were ordered from Cairo to construct it. The work went on briskly, until an excellent carriage road had been formed about half-way up the mountain, when it was discovered that on the neighbouring Ghebel Tineh an eligible situation could be found for the palace at a higher elevation than on Ghebel Mousa. Regardless of all expense already incurred, Ghebel Tineh was at once selected, and Ghebel Mousa escaped with no other mark of the Pasha's affection than this road, for which all travellers will thank him, as it has put the old ascent, by a flight of steps through a cleft in the rocks behind the convent, quite out of fashion. The palace and road were being urged on with the greatest haste while I was there. Hence the caravan composed of artizans returning to Cairo, which we had met near Wadi Useit; and hence, also, the presence of 5000 soldiers between the convent and Tûr, who worked in relays night and day upon the road, and often in the deep stillness of the night made the mountains reverberate by the explosion of their mines. This road, after passing the barracks and the convent, and crossing the shoulder of Ghebel Monéjah, turns to the south to wind up the spurs of Ghebel Mousa. We passed the convent without stopping, merely desiring the Ghebel-aiyeh, who was waiting outside with a small basket strapped on his back, to follow us. As he declined, without the leave of the Padres, we moved on without him; but had not gone farther than a couple of hundred yards before the monk who acts as storekeeper ran after us in breathless haste.

'Why have you got that soldier?' he inquired, with the air of a county magistrate pouncing on a poacher; 'you cannot go up Ghebel Mousa without a monk.' Petros speedily came to his aid, and a long dispute ensued, which ended in my referring them to the Egyptian Bey, with the assurance that if he decided they possessed the privilege of monopolizing the *ciceroneship* of the mountain, I should pay their demand, but not otherwise. The colonel afterwards told me they had come to complain, but I suppose with small success, as I heard no more of them. I left with him what the poor Arab should have got for hire; but Shaheen expressed strong doubts whether it would ever reach him.

We left Ghebel Monéjah to the left at the head of the Wadi Shueib. This mountain, though lower than its neighbours, stands isolated, and

can be seen both from Wadi Shueib and Wadi er Rahah, on which account I suppose that it is Lord Lindsay prefers it to Ghebel Mousa as the true Sinai. After ascending for about half an hour from the convent, we were able to look down upon a new net-work of mountains and wadis, stretching out towards Tûr and the southernmost point of the peninsula, which the range of Ghebel Wateiyah had hid from view on the top of Serbâl. Here we had our first proper view of Ghebel Mousa, and, as seen from the E. or SE., it is very imposing. It seems to rise almost perpendicularly from the Wadi er Rachabah—a continuation of Wadi Sebeiyeh—through which there is a path from Wadi es Sheikh and the convent, down to Tûr. This wadi attracts attention as one in which the Israelites might have found abundance of room by extending their encampment in length instead of breadth; moreover, it is a fact which challenges all contradiction, that this wadi is the nearest point, proceeding from W. to E., where any view can be had of Ghebel Mousa, and the only place in all the neighbourhood where Israel could have seen the cloud and the fire on its top, if it be indeed Sinai.

It took an hour and a quarter from the convent to reach the Chapel of Elijah, which is situated in a narrow, tortuous wadi that divides Ghebel Mousa from Ghebel Safsáfêh and Ghebel Lejâh; though the whole circle of these mountains goes by the general name of Ghebel Mousa. About a quarter of an hour before reaching the chapel, and near the place where the Pasha's road has been abruptly broken off, we passed through a deep cutting made in a belt of red sand-stone, in which I observed in great profusion beautiful specimens of fossil plants, many of which I brought away as novelties, having seen no mention of anything of the kind by modern travellers.<sup>1</sup> There is a descent of about ten minutes between the place where the new road ceases and the Chapel of Elijah in the narrow wadi; this, however, I avoided by striking across a little ravine, and beginning the ascent of Ghebel

<sup>1</sup> It turns out, however, that these (dendrite) stones are mentioned by older writers as one of the celebrities of this mountain. Mr Stanley, whose able work only fell into my hands after I had written all that relates to the Desert, says:—'The older travellers, the Prefect of the Franciscan Convent, Pococke, Shaw, and others, all notice what they call dendrite stones, *i.e.*, stones with fossil trees marked upon them. *It is curious that these have never been observed in later times.* But in early ages they seem to have been regarded as amongst the great wonders of the mountain; they were often supposed to be the memorials of the Burning Bush.'—*Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*, p. 45. Had he ascended Ghebel Mousa one year later, by the Pasha's new road, he would have found these stones in great abundance.

Mousa from the same level I had attained, and in doing so I had the good fortune to come close upon an interesting little animal skipping among the rocks. In height and size it appeared like a large guinea-pig; the colour of its bristly hair was brownish-grey, but in its general conformation and habits, and more especially in its agility, it most resembled the rabbit tribe. The soldier called it *Wubbar*. It was 'the coney' of Scripture; and its delicate little form verified the inspired description—'The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks.'—Prov. xxx. 26. The ascent from this place to the summit occupied three-quarters of an hour. It was very steep; but there are remains of a rude stair which once led up all the way, that render great assistance. Ice I found in abundance in the crevices of the rocks, as our ascent was on the north side. Being relieved from the traditionary budget of the monks, I think my attention was directed only to one wonder by my Moslem guide, and that was the reputed foot-print of Mohammed's camel stamped upon the granite rock!

The platform at the summit is very small; it supports a diminutive chapel and mosque, both of which are now nearly in ruins. On the grey granite rock forming the northern foundation of the chapel there is a well executed inscription in Armenian characters; but, with that exception, the exterior and interior of both edifices are covered with the scratchings of pilgrims or travellers, few of which are of any interest. It is a very remarkable fact, that, with all the research that has been made, there has not been discovered upon this mountain so much as a scrap of that ancient rock-writing which can be traced to the top of every peak of Serbál that has been visited hitherto.<sup>1</sup> At the side of the mosque there is a natural cavern, formed by a fissure in the rock. The mouth or open side has been built up so as to form a little chamber, into which one descends by seven artificial steps; and this, according to tradition, is the place where Jehovah hid Moses when He showed him His glory, and proclaimed the name of the Lord before him.

Sending the dragoman and soldier to seek shelter from the cold wind behind the ruined buildings, I spent an hour in profitable medi-

<sup>1</sup> The easternmost peak of Serbál which I ascended is the one described by Burckhardt and Bartlett, where the granite rocks are covered with them. Ruppell found them on the second peak from the west. Stanley found them on the top of the third or central peak; but he is mistaken in supposing that he ascended by the same ravine or stood on the same peak as Burckhardt did, for the latter states clearly that he ascended that which lay farthest east.

tation. Though I could not believe that the mountain on which I sat realized the description given of Sinai in the Bible, yet I was on Horeb, that chain of waste and barren mountains, on one of which God had descended in awful majesty, and given His law to man, amid 'thunderings and lightnings, and blackness and darkness and tempest;' and seldom have I realized more vividly than there the blessedness of being sheltered from the law's avenging power, through the righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gazing on these eternal desolations—on a forest of jagged mountain peaks, which seem to serve no earthly use, and on a labyrinth of arid valleys, bringing forth only briars and thorns, through which, as through the sieve of the Danaides, angry torrents sometimes flow, only to disappoint and make more desolate—what lessons they teach us of the mysterious wisdom of our Great Creator. What could be His reason in creating such a region of barrenness? 'Such knowledge is too wonderful for us; it is high, we cannot attain unto it.' And again, gazing on these everlasting hills, which seem to have struck their roots into the very centre of the earth, and to be able to defy the heavings of the earthquake and the spirit of the storm, what solemnizing thoughts of Jehovah's power do these words awaken, spoken in relation to His appearance on Sinai: 'Whose voice then shook the earth; but now He hath promised, saying. Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.'—Hebrews xii. 26. But these solemn, silent, majestic mountains, on which the course of time seems to inflict no mutation, bear yet a softer, sweeter testimony for their Great Creator to the believer's heart. 'The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord that hath mercy on thee.'—Isaiah liv. 10. My thoughts wandered far away to home and its dear inmates, and to my people, who at that very hour were engaged in the house of prayer, and in spirit I had converse with them from Kedar's wilderness afar.'

At length, summoning my guide, I set myself to study the leading points in the surrounding scenery. He was an elderly man; had been with Ibrahim Pasha through all his Syrian campaign; and having been long quartered at Túr, and often on the top of Ghebel Mousa, I found him very intelligent, and well acquainted with all the most remarkable mountains within sight. Nearest to that on which we stood, with only a deep ravine between, rose the dark frowning crags of Ghebel Katerin, bearing S. by W. It is said to be 1000 feet higher than Ghebel Mousa, which, according to Ruppell's measurement, is 7035

Paris feet above the level of the Red Sea, and 1700 feet above the level of the Wadi er Rahah. In the same direction, though hidden by Katerin, is Um Shomer, said to be the highest mountain in the peninsula, on whose summit no European has ever yet set foot, nor am I aware that, since Burekhardt's failure, any one has made the attempt; and beyond it, on the sea-shore, as the name denotes, is Tur el Bahr. To the NW, the highest peaks of Mount Serbál were distinctly seen,<sup>1</sup> and beyond them, in the far distance, the blue range of Abou Deraj, on the African coast. Between Katerin and Serbál, still to the NW., lies Ghebel Tineh, on which the Pasha's palace was being built. Below us, directly north, was the narrow valley in which is the Chapel of Elijah, and beyond it Ghebel Lejáh and Ghebel Safsáfeh, which are generally represented as shoulders of Ghebel Mousa, though in reality entirely separate from it: and by these the view of the plain of er Rahah and Wadi es Sheikh was completely shut out. A little farther to the north was the pass of Howá, through which we had arrived the previous day. To the north-east, there was close at hand Ghebel Fureia, rising in the angle formed by the junction of Wadi er Rahah and Wadi Sheikh, while the horizon line in the same direction was formed by the chain of Ghebel et Tih. In the same direction we had the peaks of Ghebel ed Deir peeping through the clefts in the Safsáfeh ridge, with Ghebel Monéjah a little more to the east; while between them and the horizon rose the mountains which skirt the western shore of the Gulf of Akabah. To the east and south of east there was a view of the distant blue mountains of Arabia beyond the Gulf, the water of which was shut out by intervening hills. But, on turning a little farther to SE., a broad expanse of smooth water glancing in the sunshine, with the island of Tirán in its midst, was seen a little to the north of Ras Mohammed, which divides the waters of the Red Sea into two separate gulfs.

In descending, I visited the Chapel of Elijah, which is now nearly as much decayed as the edifices on the top. Many ruins are scattered

<sup>1</sup> Mr Stanley asserts that it is Ghebel Benat, and not Serbál, which is seen, in opposition to Dr Wilson, Miss Martineau, and Laborde. Further investigation will, I think, prove that they are right, and he is in error. I marked down the peaks of Serbál, with their bearings, from my guide's lips, on the spot. He was perfectly positive on the subject, and I believe him to be correct; for as I had seen the top of Ghebel Mousa from Serbál, I can conceive no reason—considering the trifling difference of height between them—why the latter should be invisible from the former. Besides, El Benat is lower than Serbál, and lies farther to the north.

round it.<sup>1</sup> This is represented to be the place where the Lord said to Elijah, when he had forsaken his testimony in Jezreel, 'What dost thou here Elijah?' I was anxious to ascend Safsáfelh, and to have a view from thence of Er Rahah, as Dr Robinson supposes that it is the Horeb of the Pentateuch, and that from its top Jehovah spoke to Israel gathered in the plain below; so, passing a solitary cypress tree, we got down to a little pool of rain water which is collected in the bottom of the wadi, and rested a few minutes before setting out on our enterprise. Shaheen had been complaining bitterly of the damage done to his shoes by the rough walk he had had, and doing his best to extract from me the promise of another pair when we should have the good fortune to see another shoe bazaar; I left him therefore to watch the zimzimieh and the wallet by the side of the pool, while the soldier accompanied me to Safsáfelh.

From the description given in Robinson and Wilson's works, I wished to make a dash at it up one of the rocky ravines at once, but my guide was sure an easier path could be found by skirting Ghebel Lejáh, and away we set to try; but after a number of unsuccessful attempts to clamber up the smooth face of nearly perpendicular granite rocks, he took me over the ridge which overhangs Wadi Lejáh, to make the attempt from that side. It was in vain, for the rocks were quite precipitous; but, having descended so far into this wadi, I was determined not to lose all my labour, and therefore made him conduct me to a spot from which there is a good view of the now ruined convent of El Arabain.<sup>2</sup> Remounting with great fatigue, we got into the Wadi of Elijah again; and, proceeding more to the north, found ourselves at last, after a perilous climb, on what I was certain must be Safsáfelh, but which turned out to be the next rocky promontory towards the west. Both Safsáfelh and the plain were distinctly visible from it; and if all that is necessary to determine the position of Sinai were merely a hill commanding a complete view of a wide plain, we should seek in vain for a better than Safsáfelh. Its claims to be considered Horeb or Sinai, however, had better be considered in connection with others hereafter. By sitting down, and sliding with the greatest precaution, lest by gaining

<sup>1</sup> Proceeding along the wadi, I was struck with the immense number of ruined houses both in the bottom of it and along the base of Ghebel Lejáh, indicating that a town of considerable size must at one time have existed here, or, what comes pretty much to the same theory, that innumerable anchorites had huddled together their cells within its narrow precincts.

<sup>2</sup> For the story of the Forty Martyrs, in memory of whom the convent was thus named, see Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, i., pp. 159, 182.



too great velocity we should be dashed over the precipice, we descended again to the pool, where we found Shaheen fast asleep; and, after dividing the biscuits and cheese we had brought for lunch, we left this narrow mountain glen by the old staircase path, which leads down through a cleft immediately below the convent.

There is a narrow portal of hewn stone at its summit, and at least one more farther down, at each of which, in the palmy days of pilgrimage, monks were stationed, to shrive the visitors ere they stepped on holy ground. The descent, though steep, was not difficult, owing to rude flights of steps which occur at intervals, some of which are said to date back to the time of the Empress Helena, who ought to be considered the patron saint of all relics and sacred localities. A few inscriptions in Greek characters are found on the rocks, but not a scrap of Sinaitic writing. About half way down we came to a little building in an angle of the cleft, called the Chapel of the Virgin of the Zone. Both Robinson and Wilson have given the tradition which accounts for the Virgin having made her appearance here; it is not therefore necessary to relate it here.<sup>1</sup> When within a quarter of an hour of the bottom, we came to a spring of water called Máyan el Ghebel, which owes its origin, according to my guide, to a shake of Moses' rod when he ascended this mountain. The water was deliciously cool. From this point the best view of the convent is to be obtained, and it has all the appearance of a small fortress. As the path leads close to the back of it, we could observe that the lower walls bear evident traces of Roman workmanship, though an addition has been made to them by ruder hands at a much later period.

*January 30.*—This day had been set apart for the ascent of Ghebel Káterin, but the elements prevented it. During the night we had a high wind, accompanied by torrents of rain and thunder, and the rain continued till the morning was far advanced. The solemn stillness that pervades this wilderness, and the distance at which a man's voice may be heard, has not failed to be remarked by every one who has traversed it. I have already noticed also the extraordinary reverberations produced by the blastings near Ghebel Tineh by night. Some conception may therefore be formed of how majestic and awful a thunder-storm in such circumstances must be; but words are too feeble to describe the reality. Every bolt, as it burst with the roar of a cannon, seemed to awaken a series of distinct echoes on every side, and you

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. i, p. 150; *Lands of the Bible*, vol. i, p. 215.

heard them bandied from crag to crag as they rushed along the wadis ; while they swept like a whirlwind among the higher mountains, becoming faint as some mighty peak intervened, and bursting again with undiminished volume through some yawning cleft, till the very ground trembled with the concussion. Such sounds it is impossible ever to forget ; it seemed as if the whole mountains of the peninsula were answering one another in a chorus of the deepest bass. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness, and lit up the tent as if it had been day ; then, after the interval of a few seconds, came the peal of thunder, bursting like a shell to scatter its echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowering for a moment the loud howlings of the wind. I would not have lost that storm in such a place for all the rest of the journey. If such be the effects of an ordinary thunderstorm, if every mountain answers to the loud appeal, what must have been the effect of those thunderings and lightnings, with blackness and darkness and tempest, which made Moses exceedingly fear and quake, and which shall never have their counterpart till 'the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat ;' till 'the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.'—2 Peter iii. 10.

But for the water-proof sheet upon my bed, and the oil-cloth lining on the top of the tent, morning would have found me in a miserable plight. As it was, had any one peeped into the tent, the spectacle presented must have been supremely ludicrous—books, clothes, everything that could be injured with rain, were stowed away with myself in bed under the water-proof ; and in the shivering wretch, metamorphosed by a long flowing beard and fez, with an open umbrella tied to his bed-head to turn aside the rain, which entered plenteously from the sides and fastenings of the tent, few of my friends, I suspect, would have recognised me. The servants were soaked in their light unprotected tent ; and as for the poor Bedouins, who had no protection whatever but their bernouses, I pitied them from my heart as they lay rolled up in bundles, which one could fancy had just been rescued from the sea. The soldier guide came, faithful to his appointment, in spite of the storm ; but to set out in pelting rain to ascend the mountain was out of the question. About ten o'clock the rain ceased, but the mountains round were covered to their base with mist, and continued so all day. As it was questionable whether we might not lose our way in ascending, and certain we should see nothing if we reached the summit, I was obliged, though with reluctance, to abandon my visit to Ghebel Katerin. Next to standing on its summit, nothing could be

more satisfactory than the view I had had of it from Ghebel Mousa ; but I wished to have ascertained whether, supposing it, as some do, to be Sinai, there was any large wadi to the south of it in which the Israelites could have encamped. It is evident it owes its present name entirely to a monkish tradition concerning the body of St Catherine, which has obliterated its ancient name from the remembrance of the Arabs of the peninsula ; and with that fact in view, there is strong ground to suspect that the name of Moses, ascribed to the neighbouring one, at the foot of which the convent is situated, owes its origin to the same source, and not to the more ancient traditions of the Arabs.

Afraid to venture far from the tent, I climbed up the projecting spur of Safsáféh with the hope of reaching the summit, which I had not attained yesterday. A road had been begun here also by the Pasha, which, after ascending in a zigzag direction for about one hundred yards from the plain, had been abandoned : after that, the rest of the ascent was made on hands and knees. On arriving at the top of the spur, a height of 400 to 500 feet above the plain, I found that I had had my trouble for no purpose, as the mountain rises perpendicularly, and there is no ledge or break of any kind whereby to scale it. As there seemed no more likelihood of immediate rain, at mid-day I started to visit Wadi Lejáh, with the intention, if the mist should clear away, to proceed to the top of Katerin. About ten minutes' walk from my tent, after having passed the spur of Safsáféh, my attention was directed to two large blocks of granite (or one immense block split in two), which at some distant period had evidently fallen from the cliffs above, and now were embedded in the gravel nearly to their own depth. The fracture on the side of one of these is clean, straight, and perpendicular, but on the corresponding side of the other block it is irregular, and a considerable piece of the stone has been broken away, leaving now a hole between those twin rocks about two feet and a half in circumference, and about two feet deep. This is the place which monkish tradition honours as the smelting-pot of Aaron, or the mould in which he cast the golden calf ; and a little farther on we were shown where the earth opened and swallowed up Korah, Dathan, and Abiram ! I had already seen a place between my tent and the old well which the same authority points out as the identical spot where Moses cast from his hands the Tables of the Law when he witnessed the idolatry of the people ; and I was on the way to examine another spot which owes its sacredness to no higher authority, I mean the rock in Horeb. This is to be seen in the Wadi Lejáh.

Near the junction of this wadi with Er Rahah there is a garden containing fruit trees and cypresses, which is styled by way of eminence *el Bostán*—‘The Garden’—though I saw nothing in it to distinguish it from several others in the neighbourhood. It is watered by a little open aqueduct, cut along the hill side, which conveys the water from a beautiful pool containing springs of living waters, in the bed of the dry winter torrent, a good way up Wadi Lejáh. This wadi runs between Ghebel Mousa and Ghebel Katerin, and at its opening has a direction SE. by S., but winds round the former till at the top it is nearly due east. It is very narrow, but rich in water, and consequently contains a number of gardens, belonging to the Ghebelayeh, in which I observed the fig, the olive, the pomegranate, the apple, and the almond trees. The latter were in full bloom, and their delicate pink blossoms contrasted strangely with the biting wind, and the wintry garb that everything wore that day, during the whole course of which there was not a ray of sunshine. There were other gardens on the lower slope of Ghebel Tineh towards the SW., the fruit of which, I was told, was superior to that of the other gardens, particularly the pears. On entering the wadi I saw a stone inscribed with the unknown characters of Wadi Mokatteb, and several more higher up; but the inscriptions were all short, like those seen in Wadi Aleiat. About a mile from the entrance of the wadi we came to the pool already mentioned, whose existence is attributed to Moses’ rod; and after following a tolerable footpath for a mile farther up, we passed a very large block of granite, on which there was an inscription in Cufic or Armenian characters—I could not determine which. Immediately beyond this is a large mass of red granite rock about twelve feet high, through the middle of which a seam of trap rock, nearly a foot in breadth, runs in an oblique direction from the right hand at the top to the left at the bottom. Though Bartlett tells us he passed it unobserved, it is striking from its singularity, and could not fail to attract the attention of any geologist; but, considering their attainments in science, it is perhaps not to be wondered at that the monks have ascribed to the action of water what is manifestly the effect of fire.

The vein of trap bisects the whole mass, and is seen as distinctly running over the top, and down the other side, as on that which fronts the path. There are a number of crevices in this seam, which are partly natural and partly enlarged by the hand of zeal. This is the rock in Horeb, and these are the crevices out of which the water flowed when Moses struck the rock, and their number is exactly twelve, being one for each of the tribes of Israel, according to the orthodox revela-

tions of the convent! There are some travellers who accept all this with blind faith. Drs Olin and Durbin of America maintain this to be the smitten rock with all the zeal of neophytes; and, as far as I understand what he writes on the subject, Dr Wilson has a strong *penchant* in the same direction. Unfortunately there are some difficulties in the way of receiving this as the smitten rock, even if tradition had never placed it at the gate of the convent, and there were no difference of opinion respecting the identity of Sinai with Ghebel Mousa or Saf-sáfah.

*First*, These crevices, so far from communicating with the interior of the rock, are not above an inch or two deep, and they occur in the seam at the back as well as in front. *Secondly*, If that seam has been worn by the water, the flow must have been from the summit, and not from these crevices; for the vein is much more worn where it runs over the edge from the top, than anywhere on the front surface, where the crevices are. And, *thirdly*, If that seam indicates, as is pretended, the channel down which the waters ran, a continuous miracle, in suspending the laws of gravitation, must have been necessary to make it follow such a course; for the seam runs obliquely across the front, and at the base is several feet further to the left than at the top, though the face of the rock is nearly perpendicular. Having thoroughly satisfied myself that the rock in Wadi Lejáh is not the rock in Horeb, I retraced my steps, resolved to pack up and be off on the morrow.

I have hinted my preference for Serbál as Sinai, but deferred stating my reasons for it until the reader had accompanied me to Ghebel Mousa: this seems, therefore, the fitting place to refer briefly to the whole subject. If any one will consult the account given in the book of Exodus of the encampment of the Israelites in the wilderness of Sinai, and of the events which subsequently happened there, he will find that the two things required to fix the locality are, a mountain sufficiently isolated and lofty to be seen from the region lying round its base; and, secondly, a valley or opening of some kind among the mountains large enough to contain the tents of Israel, and visible through all its extent from the mountain top. There are three sources from whence information on the subject may be sought, viz., the Word of Inspiration, which is unerring, but the notices of which are extremely short,—the fragments of ancient tradition among the wild tribes of the Desert, discoverable chiefly in the names given to mountains and glens in the peninsula,—and, finally, the traditions of the monks, who have had a footing in it for about 1400 years; but the two last sources of information can only be regarded at best as corroborative. The term Horeb, as

it signifies 'desolation,' must, I apprehend, be applied to the whole southern mountain chain, and Sinai to the particular one from which the law was given, though it is to be borne in mind that the general name is frequently applied in Scripture to the particular mountain.

There are four mountains for which the honours of Sinai have been claimed. There is Ghebel Monéjah, to the left of Ghebel Mousa, which Lord Lindsay has suggested. It is an isolated mountain, having the valley of Shueib and the great wadi of Er Rahah stretching away from its base; but neither Bedouin nor monkish tradition attaches to it, nor does it correspond with Josephus' description, 'Sinai, the highest mountain of that country;' and therefore one would only choose it in case no one more likely could be found. The next is Ghebel Katerin, which has nothing to recommend it but its height. Its ancient name is not known; and, unless there be some spacious wadi to the south, it is doubtful whether one of the required conditions can be found connected with it. Next in order comes Ghebel Mousa; and in its favour we have the tradition of the monks. But its value is greatly weakened from the fact that Ghebel Mousa is only its second love, Serbál having enjoyed its favour during the first five centuries—indeed up to the time when Justinian built the church on the Mount of Moses. This tradition, then, is about equal in value to the one which has shifted Stephen's place of martyrdom without the walls of Jerusalem three times, from the west gate to the northern, and from thence to the eastern. This mountain enjoys also the Arab tradition, inasmuch as all the Bedouins call it by the name of Ghebel Mousa; but, with the fact in view that they have so thoroughly adopted the monkish tradition respecting Katerin as to have forgotten the old name of that mountain, it is a matter of strong suspicion that the monks have taught the Bedouins to call this Ghebel Mousa, and not the Bedouins the monks. On these grounds, it seems to me the tradition goes for nothing.

It remains, then, to examine how far this mountain meets the conditions of the Scripture narrative. The huge pile of mountains bounded at each of the four points of the compass (speaking in a general way) by Wadis Er Rahah, El Lejah, Shueib, Sebeiyeh, and Rachabah, though reckoned by some as one mountain, is in fact an allied group, each bearing its own proper name, of which the easternmost is Ghebel Mousa. If we suppose Wadi Sebeiyeh, and its continuation Wadi Rachabah, which run along its eastern base, to be the plain in which the Israelites encamped, there can be no objection, on the score of contradicting the Bible description, to receiving Mousa as Sinai, for there

is room enough in these wadis to have held the tents of Israel; and as Ghebel Mousa rises almost precipitously out of the latter wadi, its pointed peak can be seen from all parts of them. The same thing may be said of Ghebel Safsáfeh, which is the northernmost of this group. It almost overhangs the wide plain of Er Rahah, and its summit is seen from all parts of it. The only objection to receiving the latter as Sinai, and to my mind it is a very serious one, is, that, so far from being higher than the mountains round about, it is lower, and is not in any way distinguished even from the other peaks of its own group, except by its bolder projection into the plain. Here, then, we have Ghebel Mousa, with Wadi Sebeiyeh, on the east, and Safsáfeh, with Er Ráhah, on the north or NW., either of which fulfils the Scriptural conditions expressed in these words: 'For the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai' (Exod. xix. 11); and again, 'The sight of the glory of the Lord *was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.*'—Exod. xxiv. 17. If I were shut up to a choice between these two, I should not hesitate to choose Ghebel Mousa with Wadi Sebeiyeh. Dr Robinson has fixed on Safsáfeh as Sinai, and, holding such an opinion, has very properly rejected Ghebel Mousa altogether. Dr Wilson, however, while taking Er Rahah as the camping ground of the Israelites, will not give up Ghebel Mousa as Sinai, though *not one inch of that mountain can be seen from the plain*; and consequently he is obliged to have recourse to a hypothesis not worthy of so learned and sober an interpreter of Scripture as he is well known to be, viz., that the cloud and the fire rose high into the air above the mountain top, so as to be seen by every person in the plain of Er Rahah. The fire must have risen thousands of feet above the summit of Ghebel Mousa to have been thus seen by the people in the plain; and the reader may judge for himself how far that agrees with the words just quoted, '*like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel.*' It is right to state, however, that Dr Wilson reckons the whole pile between the convent valley and Lejáh one mountain, and supposes the cloud and the glory to have covered it all.

The fourth mountain which puts in a claim to be Sinai is Serbál. Though not so high as the southern mountains, its great elevation above all those in its immediate vicinity, and its perfect isolation, make it the most prominent and commanding feature in the peninsula. On its north-eastern side, running up to its very base, are Wadi Aleiat and Wadi Rimm, which would have afforded ample room for the encampment of the Israelites, and from which its peaks are clearly visible, thus

fulfilling the conditions required by the Scripture narrative. On entering Wadi Aleiat, and leaving to the left the great central channel of Wadi Feiran, the Israelites would, at the same time, enter the confines of the Desert of Sinai, which probably embraced all the country to the south of Wadi Feiran; and this would account for their speedy re-entrance into the wilderness of Paran, when, after a year's sojourn before the mount, the cloud was at last lifted up from off the Tabernacle. In addition to these, there are several other reasons which seem to weigh strongly in favour of Serbál, as the mountain on which the Law was given.

First, Slight as is the value which attaches in this region to ecclesiastical tradition, the fact is beyond dispute, that in the early centuries of Christianity it pointed to Serbál. At the date of the earliest notices extant regarding it—about the end of the fourth century—the town of Feiran, near its base, had already become a place of great importance, being the seat of a Bishop, and having a Senate and large Christian population; while neither Ghebel Mousa nor Ghebel Katerin were ever identified with Sinai until after the convent had been built, towards the middle of the fifth century.

Secondly, The existence of water at Wadi Feiran, and at various places on the way to Upper Horeb, prevents us from placing Rephidim higher up than Heshuéh, and from thence to Wadi el Lejáh is two days' journey, a distance much greater than that which the sacred narrative indicates as traversed by Moses and the elders to the rock in Horeb—Exod. xvii. 1-6; but the distance between Wadi Natet and Serbál would correspond very well with it.

Thirdly, The presence of Sinaitic writings on all the peaks of Serbál which have yet been visited, or at least described, taken in connection with the fact, that not a scrap of them is to be found either on Ghebel Mousa or Ghebel Katerin, clearly indicates that it was reckoned a holy mountain and made a place of pilgrimage. They may have been the work of shepherds, as they are rudely enough executed, but in that case of shepherds who had come there to worship; otherwise, had this engraving been a mere pastime, it would not have been confined to Serbál alone, but have been found on all the adjacent mountain-tops. It is true that some of these inscriptions are found in Wadi Lejáh and in the Nakb el Howá, but so they are also in many of the wadis which lead from the Desert outskirts into the interior of this labyrinth of mountains, especially where there is a pass in the hills; and they seem to have performed there the duty of sign-posts. It has been conjectured by some who hold Serbál to be



the true Sinai, that these inscriptions in Wadi Lejáh have reference to the rock now pointed out there, which they are disposed to regard as the stricken rock in Horeb; but this is simply from overlooking the fact, that the first mention we have of that rock as connected with the miracle is by Breydenbach in 1483, while Maundeville and other travellers, who were there a century and a half earlier, mention that in their day the rock was shown at the gate of the monastery, or actually within its walls.<sup>1</sup> Any connection between these writings and a rock selected for the miracle only during the currency of the fifteenth century, is preposterous. In speaking of these inscriptions in the Wadi Mokatteb, I have ventured to hint that they are the work of the inhabitants of the Desert subsequent to the passage of the Israelites, and before the Christian era, whether these were Amalekites, Midianites, or Sabathæans; and I think their appearance among the ruins of Serábit el Khádem bears out such an opinion, while their presence on Serbál would, in that case, point out the ancient aborigines as the pilgrims who worshipped on the top.

Fourthly, This seems to attain greater probability from the name the mountain bears, which signifies *Lord Baal*, taken in connection with the circle of stones, first noticed by Burckhardt, on its eastern peak. That it was a place of idolatrous worship before the passage of the children of Israel, is extremely improbable. From the account which is given us of Jethro, the Priest of Midian, it is evident that the worship and knowledge of the true God were still preserved in the wilderness at the time when Israel passed; for had he been an idolatrous priest, Moses and Aaron and the elders of Israel could not have attended the sacrifice which he offered, and afterwards partaken of the feast upon that sacrifice. But in process of time, when men began to worship the creature instead of the Creator, what place more likely to be fixed upon for their solemnities than the mountain where God had appeared? What more natural than to impose the name of Baal on the high place where they worshipped him? And what locality so well adapted for his worship in all the peninsula as this mountain, where, owing to its isolation, they could observe the sun from his rising until his going down? In such a case it is not astonishing that the name of Sinai should have given place to the name of Baal, when his worship supplanted that of the true God who, aforetime, had spoken there. The name of Baal attached to this mountain, and conveying the Sabathæan tradition of its sacredness,

<sup>1</sup> See those authors as quoted by Dr Wilson, *Lands of the Bible*, vol. i, p. 233.

seems to me to be one of the strongest links of its identification with 'the Mount of God.' We have thus the Pagan and early Christian traditions pointing to it as a place of peculiar sacredness; while it agrees more fully than any other mountain with the description of Sinai given in Exodus.<sup>1</sup>

Fifthly, Another argument urged in favour of Serbál as Sinai is, that it was the Mount Paran of Scripture, a name still recognised in that of the large wadi below. This is founded on two poetical passages of Scripture, in which Paran and Sinai are supposed to be employed as different names of the same mountain. I shall give it in the words of Dr Kitto:—"Of several other reasons which occur to our minds we remember but one, which seems to us the strongest of all, and which, moreover, has the incidental merit of explaining two texts which commentators have only been able through gratuitous conjectures to reconcile with the general statements of the Sacred Volume. Moses says, Deut. xxxiii. 2, "The Lord *came from Sinai*, and rose up from Seir unto them: He shined forth from Mount Paran, and He came with ten thousands of saints." The prophet Habakkuk says, Hab. iii. 3, "God came from Teman, and the Holy One from *Mount Paran*." This is clear enough. Let us then conclude that Mount Sinai and Mount Paran are the same. But Mount Serbál is Mount Paran; therefore Mount Serbál is Mount Sinai. That Mount Serbál is Paran is easily shown. The valley at its base still bears the name of Feiran; and it appears from the Arab historian, Makrizi, as quoted by Burckhardt, that a celebrated city in the valley, *together with the mountain* and the whole district to the sea, bore the same name.'<sup>2</sup> If Seir and Teman did not occur in these passages, and if Cushan and Midian were not mentioned by Habakkuk, there would be

<sup>1</sup> For further arguments in favour of Serbál, see Lepsius' Letters on Egypt, Ethiopia and Sinai. Mr Stanley seems to adopt Ritter's suggestion, that probably Serbál may have been 'the Mount of God,' namely, the sanctuary of the heathen tribes of the Desert, already sacred before Israel came, and that to which Pharaoh understood they wished to journey to offer sacrifice. But Jehovah's hatred of idolatry, and care to separate His worship from that of idols, renders it impossible that He should have appeared upon a mountain known to either Moses or Pharaoh as the sanctuary of the heathen, for this would have been the most effectual means of confounding all distinctions. Stanley supposes the mountain to have derived its name from Ser, the Arabic word for myrrh, overlooking the fact that Sher, both in Hebrew and Coptic, signifies 'Lord,' in the sense of Governor, and thus corresponds with the meaning of the latter syllable, which he ignores.—Stanley's Sinai and Palestine, pp. 18, 40.

<sup>2</sup> Kitto's Pictorial Bible, Note on Exod. xix. 2.

strong grounds for believing Paran and Sinai to be only poetic variations, and the reasoning in that case would be conclusive; as it is, the reader must exercise his own judgment in accepting or rejecting it; but even apart from this argument, there seem sufficient grounds for preferring Serbál to all the other localities as the true Sinai, the awful scene of the giving of the Law.

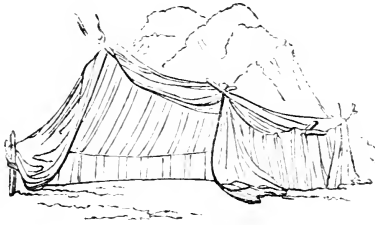
In the afternoon Dr Yousouf Canaan paid me a visit. He spoke English fluently; and I found him very intelligent and communicative. He gave me much information regarding the Coptic Church, and was also my informant as to the Pasha's reason for building a palace in the wilderness. He had been educated at Mr Lieder's school, and actually ordained a Deacon in the Coptic Church; but finding he could not live on the voluntary offerings of the people, he had resolved to become a dragoman, or guide to travellers, when his kind friends, the Lieders, procured him an introduction to Mahomet Ali's French physician, Clot Bey, who took charge of his medical education, and got him his present appointment as regimental surgeon. He told me he had been amusing himself by analysing the water both at Tûr el Bahr and here, and had found, as the result of his experiments, that the water here contained a considerable quantity of iron; while into that of the hot springs near Tûr, magnesia entered as a chief ingredient. Gaunt and cadaverous in aspect, with his shaven crown bound up, as if it had been split open in a party fight, and limping along with the help of a huge stick, he looked a man more fit for the wards of an hospital than for the rough quarters he had to occupy here. He had just recovered from a violent attack of typhus fever, contracted at Tûr, and had been sent up to Ghebel Mousa for change of air; although not long arrived, he had already experienced great benefit. His continued debility arose from want of proper nourishing food, which he could not procure. He had sent to Cairo for a little wine, but knew not when it might arrive; and he told me if I could spare him a bottle of wine and a little tea he would be very grateful, as they were just what he needed in his present weak state. I was glad to have the opportunity of administering to his wants. I accompanied him to the barracks to make my salám to the Colonel, as I had resolved to set out next morning from Ghebel Mousa, and found him as attentive and civil as on former occasions. I was thankful for a hint the doctor gave me in English, just before my final leave-taking, on a subject I had forgotten, which saved me from some embarrassment, namely, that when a visit is paid to a functionary of distinction, his servants expect a backshish from the visitor; for on emerging from

the low door of the hut I found myself surrounded by a dozen servants, all clamouring, within sight and hearing of their master, for backshish! A few fúddahs to each satisfied their expectations, and I returned to my tent to prepare for the journey.

I had been advised at Cairo, instead of going to Petra by Akabah, to go through the heart of the Desert to Nukhl, and from thence strike eastward to Petra, as the old Sheikh of Akabah has obtained a bad reputation for his treatment of travellers. After our arrival at Ghebel Mousa, a circumstance occurred which made Nassar a temporary convert to the doctrine that 'honesty is the best policy.' It has been stated that one of his camels was not forthcoming when we started from Cairo, but that it was to be sent on to Suez to meet us there. At Suez nothing was said about it, and the matter afterwards dropped out of my mind; but it turned out that he had sent it, laden with corn, direct to his tent in Wadi Feiran. Sheikh Mateir—who was Dr Wilson's guide—is now employed by the Egyptian government as superintendent of the Bedouins and camels required for the works going on between Tûr and Ghebel Tineh, and his business is to press as many as possible into his Highness' service. No sooner had Nassar's camel arrived, than it was seized and hurried off to carry stones for the road; and now when he would have gladly taken it to Nukhl, and represented it as hired to me, they refused to give it up. He was in a state of great distress, as he knew the poor animal would soon break down under the work to which it had been put; so, after telling him that if he had been honest in his dealings with us he would not have brought this trouble upon himself, I sent Shaheen to the Bey with the contract we made at Cairo, that he might convince himself the camel was engaged, and give orders for its release. This he did, and the camel was restored.

I think the last night we slept at Ghebel Mousa was, without exception, the coldest I ever experienced. The wind had been cold and cutting, as if passing over snow upon the mountains, during the whole day, but at night it rose again to a gale. There is not a shrub, nor a particle of vegetation, to be seen in all the wadis round about, so that no camp fires could be lighted. I retired to bed benumbed, but could not sleep for cold. My breath congealed on my beard into long, stiff icicles, and I feared lest by morning we should be all frozen to death. When the day appeared, the ground was white with hoar frost. The Arabs, whose bivouac had been '*sub Jove frigidò,*' were literally unable to prepare their morning meal, and two of the youngest camels were all but dead with the cold. Hanna afforded us much amusement

when he went as usual to the water barrel to procure the morning's supplies. He turned it on its edge, but no water came; he lowered it on its side without better success; then crossing himself, with a look of perplexity, he darted into the tent to inform Shaheen that all the water had been stolen. There was a hearty laugh at his expense. The poor Abyssinian, who had never been exposed to such intense cold before, was utterly ignorant of the mystery of congelation, and would not believe that the water had become a solid mass of ice!



Arabian Tent.

## CHAPTER V.

## GHEBEL MOUSA TO NUKHL.

*January 31.*—At nine o'clock we took our last look of the Wadi es Shueib, with its convent and mud barracks, and set out towards Nukhl, following the Wadi es Sheikh. Though the sun shone out brightly, the wind was intensely cold, and sharp walking was necessary to keep up the circulation. In a recess to the left of the wadi, at the NE. base of Ghebel Fureia, there was a large encampment of the Ghebelayeh, numbering twenty tents. Poor as the Towerah Bedouins are, compared with some of the more northern tribes, these poor creatures, judging by their tattered habiliments and insatiable demands for charity, have sunk to a still lower grade of wretchedness, though they are the dependents of the convent. I bought a few rock crystals from some of the children, which they said had been found on Ghebel Mousa.

In three quarters of an hour after leaving Ghebel Haroun, where we had been encamped, we arrived at a point where Wadi es Sheikh curves round to the north, and there bid adieu to Ras Safsáfeh, which hitherto had been a prominent object. At this point also the Wadi Sebeiyeh branches off to the right, sweeping towards the SE., and joining Wadi Rahabah at the foot of Ghebel Mousa. As the only complete view of that mountain is to be had from this wadi, I turned into it for that purpose; and in a quarter of an hour had got far enough to clear Ghebel Monéjah, when Ghebel Mousa was revealed—a noble mountain rising abruptly from the wadi. This valley is of great length; and those who still cling to Ghebel Mousa as Mount Sinai are shut up—if they take the Bible as their guide—to it as the place where the Israelites encamped. Retracing our steps, we followed the course of Wadi es Sheikh, and at ten o'clock passed a rising ground on which was piled a great heap of stones, called Regum es Uied, to which Nassar directed my attention, as a place where in former days a giant had gained a great victory. His

enemies poured down rocks and stones on him from the surrounding hills; but he repaid them with interest, and drove them all before him. These stones are the debris of the battle. I asked for further particulars about Uied, but he knew nothing more of him.

At 11.15 we came to the Weli, or tomb of Nebi Sáleh, from whom it is generally inferred by travellers that this wadi derives its name; but, when I called it the tomb of *Sheikh* Sáleh, I was indignantly reprovèd by the Bedouins, who told me he was not a Sheikh—the title they give to their saints—but a Nebi or prophet! They said he was the father and founder of their tribe—the Sawálihah; and that, in honour of him, they come to visit this spot once a year, with all their tents, at the time of the rising of the Nile, according to the dragoman's mode of reckoning—at the conclusion of the date harvest, according to their own; and, after a grand feast on sheep, goats, and young camels, and a dance in the Arab fashion, they set out with their dates for the Cairene market. From this I infer that it is not so much a religious ceremony connected with the prophet as a festival in commemoration of the harvest home, celebrated at the only spot within their territory which has any historical value for them. The tomb has been already described frequently by eastern travellers. It is a small square building, surmounted by a low dome, with a covered porch before it towards the north-west. Within there is a kind of catafalco, consisting of an awning, supported on four rude wooden pillars, about four feet and a half high, and closed in by curtains of green cloth hanging down to the earth, on which are embroidered in silk various Arabic devices and inscriptions, prominent among which is the name of this local prophet. Within the curtained enclosure, which Nassar willingly raised for my inspection, an empty wooden coffin lies on the surface of the ground, and immediately below it the bones of Nebi Sáleh rest in peace. The only act of devotion which I had yet observed on the part of our Arabs took place here. Sheikh Nassar, when he came into the tomb, immediately fell on his knees, and thrusting his hands under the hangings, began to feel for something. I was at a loss to imagine what he could be searching for so diligently, when he brought out a small quantity of sand, and began rubbing it over his tarboosh, repeating at the same time a prayer which occupied about two minutes. While thus engaged, he held out the sand to me. I asked why he touched his head with sand?—and the answer was, that it was out of respect to their ancestor, and in token of grief at his loss. He then called the dragoman and all his men to come

forward. The latter at once fell on their knees, and put the dust upon their heads, as he had done ; but Shaheen deemed it unnecessary to pay any respect to a Bedoui saint, even though, according to some, he was nearly connected with the Arabian prophet. In the act thus performed by the Sheikh and his men, of casting dust on their heads, we can at once recognise, as existing still among these primitive tribes, the same mode of mourning for the dead, or for some sore calamity, with which, as practised by the Hebrew nation, we have become familiar in reading Old Testament history. The manner, too, in which it was performed, viz., by rubbing a few grains of sand upon the top of the turban, is probably the very mode adopted by the ancients, and banishes all disagreeable ideas of uncleanness, which are apt to be associated in a European mind with heaping dust or ashes on the bare head, when we read of a king of Israel or Nineveh observing that custom.

A few hundred yards beyond Weli Sáleh, on the right, we passed the Wadi Saweirah (containing a well of the same name), through which there is a path to Akabah ; and about an hour after, on the same side, we passed the mouth of the Wadi Neguat et Thummar, or 'the Vale of Dates,' leading in the same direction, by following which a man can make his way on foot across the mountains, but our guides declared it too steep and difficult a path for camels. A quarter of an hour farther down we came to a large open space, which may best be described as a bay swelling out to the right of the Wadi es Sheikh. This is the place which Drs Robinson and Wilson suppose to have been Replidim ; and from the rate at which we were travelling, I guessed it about nine miles from our starting place in the morning. At 12.35 we emerged from the region of Upper Horeb, through a narrow, lofty, and picturesque pass in the range of Ghebel Wateiyah, over which it may be remembered we had formerly scrambled by the Nakh el Howá. Immediately on leaving it, another group of mountains came in sight, running in the same direction, of nearly equal height, and having their granite flanks broken by dykes of porphyry, which at a distance seemed black as coal. The Arabs call it Ghebel Erfán. Another half hour's ride brought us full in view of Serbál, looking as if in his majesty he could well defy the comparison we had been making between him and his brothers of the higher group. Nearer to us rose a mountain, apparently not very much lower, to which our Arabs gave the name of Ghebel Um Túr. This mountain still puzzles me, as I do not remember to have seen any one of that name either from Serbál or Ghebel Mousa.



Since mid-day the sky had become charged with heavy black clouds, the sun had disappeared, and the wind, icy as ever, now raised clouds of dust, making the journey very disagreeable. The effect produced by the cold wind on the camels was very amusing. It was so painful to them, that in the hope of reaching some shelter, they got over the ground faster than I had ever seen them do before; occasionally breaking into a trot, so that we got on an average a mile or a mile and a half more out of them in the hour, than their masters can usually manage. It was evident enough we should be overtaken ere long by a deluge of rain; so, on our arrival at an *island* in the middle of the dry torrent bed of es Sheikh, called Tárfa Hagár Gad-réneh, on which there was a grove of tarfa trees of respectable size, Nassar proposed that we should pitch our tents, early as it was, for we should find no shelter farther down for man or beast. He urged as reasons, that as a storm was certainly coming on, the tents would most likely be blown over if pitched where there was no cover: and that he was most anxious, for the sake of his camels, to avail himself of the shelter of the trees. These considerations, together with the remembrance of the severity of the previous night, and the possibility of keeping up a roaring fire with the abundance of dry wood which lay scattered about, made me at once agree to his proposition, though we had only travelled five hours.

We encamped in the midst of the trees, on a spot which had been vacated but a few days before by a party of charcoal burners, the signs of whose operations were visible around us. It was pitiful to behold the quantity of wood lying rotting on the ground on every side. This no doubt arises in part from the hewing down of the trunks for charcoal, but in part also from the camels tearing down the branches, for this tree is their favourite food; so that, under the combined influences of these destructive agencies, it is not improbable that this grove, considerable though it be, will ere long disappear altogether. And this may very well account for the scarcity of wood in the Desert, even where there is soil sufficient for its growth; for man and beast have united for ages in the destruction or consumption of that which grew spontaneously, while there has been no thoughtful head, or careful hand, to supply its place by new plantations. Indeed, when we consider that this process may have been carried on systematically for many centuries, it is impossible to conjecture, from its present state, what the physical aspect of this Desert was in the days of Israel, or how much of its present barrenness may be traced to the thoughtless waste of its inhabitants since that time.

The tents were soon pitched, and a cheerful fire lighted in front of mine; and for the first time in twenty-four hours I began to feel a grateful warmth. As the evening advanced, I had some coffee distributed among the poor Bedouins, which warmed and comforted them greatly; then forming a circle round the fire, they sat on their heels and smoked by turns out of one pipe, which did duty for the whole company, while I was busily engaged writing within. They had previously announced to Shaheen that they were to have a dance in the evening, because they had plenty of wood and great fires to keep them warm; so at nine o'clock we had a repetition of the dance already described. The scene was a strange one: the heavens above us were black as ink; the camp fire, stirred by the gusts of wind, shed a fitful light on the tents and trees around; while the red glare lit up the swarthy faces of the Arabs, as they stood close to it, singing and rocking their bodies for joy that they had found abundance of wood wherewith to warm themselves. It was a striking illustration of the Epicurean maxim, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' In the satisfaction of the passing hour, the coming storm was forgotten; but within half an hour the rain came down in such torrents as I have seldom witnessed, and in the midst of cold, wet, and misery, they spent the night upon the ground. Some fractures in the oil-skin covering made it necessary to put my umbrella again in requisition as a canopy; and until my bed got drenched by the rain coming through the sides of the tent, I slept as soundly as if I had been on a bed of down. Next day (February 1) it rained continuously, and all the hills around were white with snow; so travelling being out of the question, it was devoted to letter writing, and to my journal.

*February 2.*—We had another night of heavy rain, and as the morning broke there seemed very little chance of continuing our journey; but about ten o'clock the rain ceased, the sun struggled to break through the watery clouds, and patches of the blue heavens began once more to appear; so we resolved to start. A few minutes after eleven the camels were all loaded, and we emerged from the island of Tárfa Hagár Gedréneh. Nothing could be more bleak or desolate than the scenery around. The hills were covered almost to their base with snow; and the wind was still fierce and cutting, rendering walking a much more agreeable exercise than riding. The Wadi Sheikh presented, during the course of this day's journey, the appearance of a narrow inland lake, with a succession of headlands and bays on either side, which, if they could be brought together, seemed as if they would fit into one another almost with the same precision as the teeth of

two saws. The mountains gradually decreased in height and sharpness of outline, as we descended the wadi, and though they would be reckoned grand in a more level country, looked tame in comparison with those left behind. They are all of granite, crossed in various directions by dykes of porphyry and trap, and as seen at a distance sprinkled with snow, they looked like hill-sides at home, intersected by low hedgerows. On one of these mountains, called Abu Mouiërát, which we passed at 12.45, I counted six of these dark parallel lines cutting it obliquely, then running across Wadi Sheikh, and reappearing on the opposite mountain to the left. To our left also, but a considerable distance off, was a high mountain covered thickly with snow, called by the Arabs Ghebel Eitáhah. At 1.20 we passed to the right Wadi Musbach, and at this point Serbál came again into view, bearing W. by SW., and continued the most prominent object during the rest of our journey down the wadi. The more I looked on this majestic mountain, standing *facile princeps* among its compeers, the impression became deeper, that this was the scene of Jehovah's glorious appearing at the giving of the Law. Among the mountains in its vicinity I remarked those called Tûr, Metácha, and El Emiáneh; and the effect of the *chiaroscuro*, as the rays of the sun, darting through the clouds, rested sometimes on one, sometimes on another, of these mountains, was very sublime.

At 2.25 we turned to the right, up Wadi Sliëf, which runs northward, and here took our final leave of Wadi es Sheikh, after having followed it from its rise to within half a mile of the entrance of Wadi Shurif es Sahab, where we had formerly struck off from it on the way to Ghebel Mousa. Wadi Sliëf ends in a crest of low hills, through a short but rugged pass, in which our camels scrambled with difficulty. The descent is nearly as rapid on the other side into the Wadi el Achdar, which runs in a westerly direction into Wadi Sheikh some miles below. We struck into it at 3.30, about the middle of its course, where Ghebel Medeíah rises to the left; but it ran fully a mile farther to the east, and there appeared to terminate in a high conical hill called Ghebel Farsch er Gabeh. We turned down the Wadi Achdar to the left, and on a mass of porphyritic rock, almost at the entrance, found a short inscription in the characters of Wadi Mokatteb; and a quarter of an hour later, there was another on the same side, opposite to the mouth of Wadi Nummel, which we entered and pursued for ten minutes; and then, climbing over another granite ridge, we entered Wadi el Eish, a large valley coming down from among the hills to the east, and eventually falling into Wadi Sheikh,—the great channel which drains

off the superfluous water in the rainy season from all this region. On the right hand, as we descended it, Wadi Beráh opened up,—a wide and noble plain, which I had noticed from the top of Serbál, bounded with bare hills of red granite on either side, and stretching away with a gradual elevation to the north.

At the point where Wadis el Eish and Beráh unite, there is a large burying-ground belonging to the Sawálihah, in which some of Nassar's relations are buried. He left us to say a prayer at their graves, fell on his face, rubbed some dust on his fez, as at Nebi Sáleh's tomb, and in about two minutes was with us again. His men passed by without any sign of respect or devotion. Many of the graves, besides having the stone at head and foot, according to the invariable Mohammedan custom, were also adorned with branches of the white broom (*Retem*) which grows in considerable quantity around. We entered Wadi Beráh at 4.15, and at its mouth we had a most extensive view westward, embracing Wadi Sheikh, Wadi Shurif es Sahab, and all the hills around. I had imagined that nothing could exceed the view of Serbál from Wadi Sheikh; but I am persuaded now, that a finer is to be had from this point, and it is well worth while for travellers, who do not intend returning by Wadi Beráh, to make a short *detour* from Wadi Sheikh on purpose to obtain it, as it is not more than four miles distant. Two splendid domes of red granite, about 500 feet high, bearing the name of Ghebel Beráh, rose like temples on either side at the mouth of the wadi, and reminded me, comparing great things with small, of the two churches which guard the entrance of the Corso at Rome, as seen from the Piazza del Popolo. After proceeding about a mile up the wadi, we pitched our tents for the night at the foot of the mountain to our left, in order to find shelter from the cutting wind. Fine as the view had been from the mouth of the wadi, a much more extensive one, embracing the whole southern range of mountains, was obtained from the spot we had chosen for our night's quarters. Serbál and the western mountains were shut out; but over the hills which we had been skirting all day rose the dark outline of Ghebel Wateiyah, in which the pass of Howá was clearly discernible, and beyond it the peaks of Ghebel Mousa, Katerin, and a legion of others, all illuminated by most delicate rose tints, reflected from the crimson glow which the sun had left behind him on the western horizon. While attempting to sketch the landscape, the colours changed, and almost in a moment the mountains had all assumed a leaden sombre hue, though their forms remained visible as long as a ray of the short twilight lasted. This must be set down as panorama the third,

in order of time, though in point of extent and beauty it surpasses that from Ghebel Mousa.

While the evening meal was being prepared, I measured the width of the plain by pacing it, and found it 400 yards. I then climbed up the hill to the left of our tents, to get another view of Ghebel Serbál. From this point I found that another wadi of considerable size, called Wadi Ghadir, runs parallel to Wadi Beráh; and I got what I hoped for, a most exquisite view of Serbál, with all its dark peaks standing out in *relievo* against the still slightly coloured western sky. Turning to descend, my attention was arrested by a number of cairns of stone, which, from their blackened appearance, had evidently remained untouched for ages. On examining them more closely, I found four on the crest of the hill; two bore marks of having been at some period opened from the top, and the stones were scattered about. These were evidently ancient graves formed of an outer circle of stones, about ten feet in diameter, upon which a cairn had been raised. In the centre of the two which had been opened, there was a quantity of pulverized granite, whether resulting from man's labour or from the natural decay of the blocks which had been piled upon the graves, I was unable to determine. A small hole had been dug in the very centre of each, probably in search of treasure. The other two were quite undisturbed, except that in both a huge stone had fallen in from the top, revealing two narrow chambers formed of granite blocks, each of which could only have contained a single body. In these, the floor of the chambers was on a level with the ground; while in the two opened ones, interment seemed to have taken place beneath the surface. As I was alone, and my tent fully half a mile off, I could not make farther investigations; and, indeed, from the superstitious respect the Bedouins have for a grave, and the notion they entertain that every European comes to the Desert in search of hidden treasure, even if I had had some of the men with me, it is probable they would have resisted rather than aided such investigations. Descending to the plain just below this crest, which connects the first and second hills on the left of the wadi, I came upon two other cairns of stone of the same size, apparently undisturbed. These all resembled in form and appearance the ancient graves which we had seen in Wadi Nátet. Nassar was summoned as soon as I got back to my tent, and asked if he knew of any ancient graves in this neighbourhood, because I had discovered some heaps of stones both on the hill and on the plain. His answer was written down at the time, and I now give it in his own words:—‘I know the heaps of stones; they are ancient graves; they

do not belong to my tribe or to any tribe of the Bedouins; and we have never known them by any other name than *Turbet es Yahoud*, "the Graves of the Jews." I told Shaheen to ask the other men what these cairns were, and they gave him the same reply. Could this be a mere shelter for ignorance, or is the tradition really true? They did not so characterize the Christian graves in Wadi Feiran or at Nakb el Howá, which are indeed of a totally different construction. Does not this tradition attaching to these ancient cairns afford a strong presumption that the Israelites marched this way? Dr Robinson passed down this wadi on his way to Ghebel Mousa, and appears neither to have seen nor heard of these cairns; and as they are unnoticed in any book of travels I have met with, I should probably have done the same had I not stumbled on them accidentally. I have therefore been particular in noting the locality in the hope that this may catch the eye of some future traveller, who may be induced to examine the neighbourhood more thoroughly than the waning light enabled me to do, when I suspect many more will be found.

*February 3.*—This was a birth-day at home; and the remembrance of it, when I rose, sent my thoughts thousands of miles away from the little world around me. The weather had become settled, and a bright sunshine displayed the upper range of Horeb in great beauty to my farewell gaze. We got in motion a quarter before eight o'clock, and proceeded northwards, the Wadi Beráh becoming wider as we proceeded. In about half an hour after starting we came upon more tombs on the left side of the valley. These are oblong in form, the angles being still distinctly marked, and the cairns rose from four feet to four feet and a-half above the level of the ground. There are several chambers in each, the dimensions of which, as nearly as I could judge, are eight feet by two, and a foot and a half high. Exactly opposite the mouth of the Wadi er Tammer to the right, on an eminence in the middle of the valley, we came upon other five cairns, and round about them other graves which are level with the ground, but surrounded by blocks of stone set in squares or circles. Besides these, the whole of this part of the wadi seems to have been covered with graves, the stones of which are scattered about in all directions. What can these be? The Bedouins still maintain that they are the *Turbet es Yahoud*. There is no vestige of a town or village throughout the plain: it is too distant from Feiran for these graves to have any connection with it; and the idea of pilgrims having died here in such numbers as they indicate is not to be entertained, even if the graves themselves did not betoken an earlier existence.

But supposing that they do belong to the Israelites, on what occasion was there such a mortality among them? for they must have passed this way, if at all, before 'God sware in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest.' I am strongly inclined to believe that this is the TABERAH of Scripture, the first halting-place of the host after they had left the wilderness of Sinai, and that these graves are the Kibroth-hattaavah, 'the Graves of Lust;' for these two names seem both to indicate the same locality. The account of this place in the sacred narrative is as follows:—'And the children of Israel took their journeys out of the wilderness of Sinai; and the cloud rested in the wilderness of Paran; . . . and they departed from the mount of the Lord, three days' journey; and the ark of the covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey, to search out a resting-place for them. . . . And, when the people complained, it displeased the Lord: and the Lord heard it; and His anger was kindled; and the fire of the Lord burnt among them and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and, when Moses prayed unto the Lord, the fire was quenched. And he called the name of the place Taberah: because the fire of the Lord burnt among them. And the mixt multitude that was among them fell a lusting, and the children of Israel also wept again, and said, Who shall give us flesh to eat? . . . Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes. . . . And there went forth a wind from the Lord, and brought quails from the sea, and let them fall by the camp. . . . And while the flesh was yet between their teeth, ere it was chewed, the wrath of the Lord was kindled against the people, and the Lord smote the people with a very great plague; and he called the name of that place Kibroth-hattaavah: because there they buried the people that lusted.'—Numbers x. 12, 33, xi. 1, and 31, 33, 34.

The four wildernesses in this part of Arabia of which we read in Scripture are Shur, Sin, Zin or Paran, and Sinai. Shur we know ran along the eastern border of Egypt, probably from the Mediterranean to Elim; a part of it on the shore of the Red Sea receiving the local name of Etham, just as a portion of the wilderness of Paran received the name of Ziph (1 Samuel xxvi. 2) from its vicinity to a town bearing that name on the southern border of Canaan. Paran and Zin we also know from passages of Scripture were synonymous names for the same locality.—Compare Num. xiii. 3, 26, xxxiii. 36, xxvii. 14. It is just possible, notwithstanding the difference of a letter in the spelling of Sin or Zin, that they likewise are

synonymous, in which case the wilderness of Paran must have embraced the whole Desert north of Wadis Useit, Murkháh, and Es Sheikh, up to the borders of Canaan. In that case the whole of the peninsula south of the great natural boundary formed by the Wadis Sheikh and Feiran would constitute the wilderness of Sinai. If, however, we regard Paran or Zin and Sin as separate localities, the southern boundary of both would still be that just indicated; and a line drawn northward to Beersheba from Wadi Natet or Wadi Heshueh may probably have been the boundary between the two.

But whatever conclusion the reader may come to regarding Sin and Zin, if Wadi es Sheikh be accepted as their southern boundary, it is evident that as soon as the Israelites departed from Wadi er Rahah or Wadi Aleiat (according as Ghebel Mousa or Serbál may be fixed on as Sinai), they would enter the wilderness of Paran. Those who hold the first named mountain to be Sinai, make the host retrace their steps for a certain distance down the Wadi es Sheikh, and then turn off through narrow and difficult wadis towards Akabah. But even were we to coincide in their views regarding the mountain, it is much more probable that a host, now marching in battalions, should be led through the largest and most unencumbered wadis in the district, than through such narrow valleys as Suwéirah or Thúmmar; and such precisely are Wadi es Sheikh and Wadi Beráh, leading into the great plain of Ramleh to the north, near the eastern end of which is the well of El Hudrah, which Dr Wilson has identified with Hazeroth, their next halting place beyond Taberah. On the other hand, assuming Serbál to have been 'the Mount of God,' the Israelites, on departing from Wadi Aleiat, would resume their course to the eastward, precisely where they had left it off the year before; and passing out from the fertile oasis of Feiran into Wadi es Sheikh, would turn up the broad valley of Beráh, and so proceed eastwards by the plain of Ramleh towards the head of the Elanitic Gulf. It is admitted that the distance between the foot of Serbál and the head of Wadi Beráh is a short one for three days' journey, being not above thirty miles; but if we consider that the multitude of women and children, as well as the men of war, were now setting out anew, after a whole year's inaction, and that they drove their cattle with them, it will probably be acknowledged that ten miles a day was as much as they were able for. In connection with this field of the dead, and the Bedouin tradition, the similarity between the name of this wadi and Taberah must not be overlooked; indeed, if the **n**, which is a mere particle, or servile, indicating the noun, be dropped, the identity between them is complete. Again, from the relative



position of the sea and this valley to one another, with only the range of Horeb intervening, a strong south-wester would drive the quails from the coast of Africa in this very direction.

About an hour after setting out, we arrived at a granite hill of most remarkable appearance, reminding one exactly of a bell-tent, or the roof of a Chinese pagoda, which the Arabs called Zub el Bahri. It forms the upper boundary of this valley, and two wadis branch off on either side of it. That to the right, which is called Lub el Eblíyeh, leads away to the east, into Wadi Hudrah, and would be the direct path for the Israelites going from hence towards Ain el Hudrah. Nassar told me that water is found in this wadi, at a place called Moié Tigheny. Looking down it, we saw at a considerable distance to the NE., a high mountain called Ghebel el Egmeb, and still farther off, due north, a small portion of the chalky cliffs of Ghebel et Tih, in the direction of Nakb el Maréikhy. Our course, however, lay down the Wadi Lub el Soufleh to the left of this pagoda-like hill. At the western base of Zub el Bahri, in the mouth of Wadi Soufleh, more graves of the same kind occur, some having cairns piled on them, others simply large stones on edge, enclosing a square or circular space; and near, though quite distinct from them, there is a modern burying-ground used by the Bedouins. This place is called Bowali Abou Israel. Both Ghebel Mousa and Serbál are here hid from view, but the peaks of Katerin are distinctly visible. From the time we left Wadi es Sheikh, we had been gradually ascending to this point; but now there was a descent equally gradual through Wadi Soufleh into Wadi Kineh, which we reached in an hour and twenty minutes. The latter is a wide valley, in the form of the letter Y, having two forks stretching E. and NW., while the trunk runs westward, and falls into Wadi Ribbeh, to the left of the path we pursued. A low isolated hill rises in the middle of it, to which our attention was first attracted by a column of blue smoke curling up from its base. On approaching it, we found two or three black tents; a number of women tending their goats, and two men burning charcoal. The rest of their tents, they said, were at the head of the valley towards the east. Shaheen wanted to purchase a sheep or kid; but as the men to whom the flocks belonged were not there, the women declined the responsibility of the sale. I observed that the women, like those of Wadi Feiran, wore their hair twisted into the form of a horn, very much in the same way as the Druse women of Lebanon wear the *tantour*. A few sant trees were growing in Wadi Kineh, the first we had seen since leaving Wadi Feiran. We followed the

north-western fork of this wadi to its head, and while our camels were slowly trudging on, Saad left us to fill a skin with water from a pool at the foot of the mountains to the right, and soon overtook us, having attained his object.

A narrow and exceedingly rough pass leads from the head of Wadi Kineh, to the head of Wadi Barág ; immediately before entering which, there was another Arab burying-ground, ornamented with branches of the retem, called Turbet um Eslim. Through this pass, I was told, the Pasha travelled in his carriage last year, on his way to Ghebel Mousa. I expressed my disbelief in emphatic terms, for even a camel could scarcely pass between the huge masses of rock strewn around, without having his load torn from his sides. Nassar, however, explained that on coming to this point, his Highness had placed himself on a charger, and his carriage on the shoulders of his soldiers, till the difficulty was surmounted, when he returned to his chariot. A few hours later I had ocular demonstration that a carriage had passed that way, for the trace of the wheels, in one of the wadis through which we passed, was as distinct as if it had been made but a few days before.

Wadi Barag, called by Dr Robinson el Burk, is of greater extent than the one we had left, as it took us three hours to get to the foot of it. It is also so strewn with loose stones as to make it exceedingly painful for the camels to travel in, but the number of sant or seyal trees which it contains, gives it a lively appearance, while the precipitous walls of granite by which it is shut in, especially towards the lower end, are exceedingly picturesque and grand. After we had travelled down it for an hour, I observed on one of the granite cliffs to the right, a short inscription in the Sinaitic characters ; and half an hour later, a second on a large porphyritic rock embedded in the valley, which consisted of three lines, the last of which, containing only a few characters to one side, probably indicate the name of the writer. In the vicinity of the first of these, we came to a place called Karnak, to which Nassar called my particular attention, as the scene of a battle, fifteen years before, between the Tówerah and Ibrahim Pasha at the head of his troops. The occasion of it, he said, was a robbery of coffee to the amount of 100 camel loads, on the way from Túr el Bahr to Cairo, made by the Tówerah to avenge some injury, real or imaginary, which they had sustained. Ibrahim marched his troops up this wadi, and the Tówerah having formed a barricade across it, crowned the heights on either side, and fired down upon them. He admitted that the Tówerah were vanquished, but affirmed

that the loss on either side was equal, as each had left 100 dead on the field.<sup>1</sup>

We met in this wadi several Bedouins belonging to the tents in Wadi Kineh, one of whom came up as if to an old acquaintance, and gave me the Arab salutation. It turned out that he was one of those with whom I had smoked and conversed in the Sheikh's tent at Heshueh. They inquired anxiously whether we had had any rain farther down, as they still wanted five days of their usual quota. On asking for an explanation of this, they told me that, during the winter months, they have usually twenty days of rain; and a day or two short of that quantity, as it affects the amount of vegetation, makes all the difference between a good and a bad season. Being five days short of the needed quantity, while the season was now well advanced, they were beginning to be very anxious; and great was their joy when we told them we had had more than enough of it, both at Ghebel Mousa, and among the tarfa trees of Es Sheikh, for they made sure it would soon be with them.

After passing Wadi Abou Sukker to the right at two o'clock, the valley becomes very narrow, and soon turns directly to the west, but all egress seems barred by the rugged granite mountains in front, and on either side. This was decidedly the most romantic and wildest part of the Desert I had yet seen, except the lower part of Wadi Useit. Leaving Wadi Barag at 3.10, we entered Wadi Arabah; but, after a ride of twenty minutes, we left it where it turns to the north-west. This Wadi Arabah contains a quantity of soft sandy soil, into which, as I was walking at the time, I sank almost above the shoes. During heavy rain a vast body of water must rush through it, as it drains no less than four large wadis. At 3.30 we entered a fine broad wadi called Dubbe Sheikh Akhmet, and shortly afterwards met a large kafleleh consisting of twenty-one camels, and fifteen Ghebel-ayeh, carrying stores of various kinds to the convent of St Catherine. In it we had the first indications that we had returned to the region of red sand-stone, which we had left at Wadi Mokatteb. As travellers have described it as also occurring much farther to the east, on the route from the Convent to Akabah, it appears that between the Jurassic limestone of Ghebel Tih, and the primitive rocks of the

<sup>1</sup> This is an exploit of which the tribe seems to be proud, as it was related both to Laborde and Dr Robinson. The former makes it an attack on the Haj caravan, and the latter a robbery committed between Suez and Cairo. Nassar's version however appears the most probable of the three.

southern mountains, a belt of red sand-stone runs across the whole peninsula from west to east.

Half-an-hour brought us to the head of the wadi, where there is another Arab burying-ground, in the middle of which, surrounded by a low wall of loose stones in shape like a horse-shoe, is the grave of Sheikh Akhmet, from which the wadi derives its name. This Akhmet, the Bedouins maintain, was a friend of the Prophet; but had this been the case, he would probably have had a tomb of somewhat greater pretensions than has fallen to his lot. It was here that, as already related, poor Nassar got so laughed at by Shaheen for his short and blundering devotions, that his Arab blood became roused, and it was with some difficulty that I prevented them from coming to blows. At the entrance of Wadi Sheikh Akhmet, two of our men left us, and struck up Wadi Mar'ial in search of one of their encampments, where they hoped to buy a supply of beans for the camels, as the stock they had brought with them was nearly exhausted. From Wadi Sheikh Akhmet we passed into another broad valley called Wadi Khamileh, on the top of which, under the shelter of the red sand-stone cliffs, we pitched our tents for the night, after a continuous journey of nine hours and a half. To the right of this wadi lies the Wadi er Haiyeh, and to the left Wadi Humor, through which the upper road to the convent passes, from the place, where, on our downward journey, we turned aside from it on entering Wadi Teiyibeh. A ridge of red sand-stone hills, from 200 to 400 feet in height, called Ghebel Suweg, divides the Wadi Humor from Wadi Khamileh. Had I known at the time how near we were to Serabit el Khadem, it should not have been passed without a visit, but this was only discovered when it was too late.

*February 4.*—In the cliffs overhead many ravens had built their nests, and the noise they made, even before daybreak, effectually banished sleep. While the camels were being loaded, I discovered on a bank of soft sand not far from the tent, the fresh footprints of a flock of gazelles, and also of a large wolf, who probably had had a mind to breakfast on one of them, unless the sight of our tents had raised expectations of something better there. The men who left us last night had not returned, and the packing went on slowly in consequence, so that it was 8.30 before we got off. Half-an-hour more brought us to the head of Wadi Kamileh, from whence the descent into Wadi Ramleh immediately begins, and on the slight rising ground which forms the boundary, there is a burying-ground belonging to the Aleikat tribe, on whose territory we had now entered. To this tribe Aleiwa one of our men belonged, and it was to this place he wished

to come, when he asked permission to leave us at the mouth of Wadi Humor. From this point there was an extensive view to the east, north, and west; but the scenery was of a totally different character from that we had left behind. The vast broad plain in front resembling an inland sea, and the cliffs of the Tih varying in hue, from a white to a sombre brown, on the other side, with isolated mountains rising like islands both to the east and west, gave a cheerfulness and airiness to the landscape, chiefly from contrast with the massive gloom of the region from which we had just emerged. To our left, about three hours distant, our guides pointed out Serábit el Khádem; and still farther west, apparently rising out of the Wadi Ramleh near the place where Wadi Humor joins it, Ghebel Serbout el Ghamel, so called from its resemblance to a camel's saddle. Towards the east, Wadi Ramleh and the Tih mountains stretched away without a break for ten or fifteen miles; when farther view of them was interrupted by a ridge called Ghebel Himiër, which seemed to run right across the plain, where the Ghebel Ojmeh chain stretches off to the north nearly at right angles to the range of Ghebel Tih. In answer to my inquiry how far Ain el Hudrah was distant from our present position, Nassar said it would take two days and a half of camel travelling to reach it. The Nakb el Maréikhy, which is the easternmost pass in the Ghebel Tih, is eight hours distant; but its exact position could not be made out, as Ghebel Ghemeen lies in the way.

The passes by which access is had from the lower to the upper Desert, through the Tih chain, are, in most of the maps I have seen, either incorrectly marked, or omitted altogether.<sup>1</sup> Beginning from the west, where Ghebel Tih alters its course from S. to E., the first pass is Nakb el Wutah; the next, Nakb el Ráchiney, to which we were directing our steps; the third, Nakb el Wúrsah; and last and easternmost of all, Nakb el Maréikhy. As we descended into Wadi Ramleh, we saw to the left, half a mile away, a considerable group of tents belonging to the Aléikat, and passed through large flocks of goats belonging to them, which were tended by young girls. At 10.30 the two men who left last night rejoined us. They had made a long *detour* in search of the tents we had just passed, and only reached them at midnight; but they might have saved themselves the trouble, for they could not obtain the supplies they wanted. It

<sup>1</sup> The most accurate on the whole, considering its size, is one of Syria, with a continuation of the Desert, constructed by Professor Hughes, and published by the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge.

took four hours to cross the plain of Ramleh, which rises in rough hummocky ground, deeply furrowed with ravines, to the base of Ghebel Tih. I looked in vain for any opening, or semblance of a path, up the side of the perpendicular rampart, but at length Nassar pointed out a zigzag line stretching along its face, by which the camels were to ascend; and a shorter but steeper one in a gulley by which those who had a fancy for it might follow. The difference of time was half an hour; so I chose the short one, to enjoy at my leisure the prospect from the top. I counted six horizontal layers of indurated limestone, varying from fifty to a hundred feet in thickness; and between each two a thinner layer much decomposed by the action of the atmosphere. These two sets of strata present alternate stripes of white and brown, and account for the strange variegation of colour, which is the most striking feature of Ghebel et Tih, from whatever point it is viewed. A few fossil nautili, and some beautiful specimens of flesh-coloured sulphate of lime, were the only memorials I found worth carrying away with me. After an hour and a half of hard climbing, I reached the summit of the cliffs, accompanied by Shaheen and Saad, and sat down to rest, and to enjoy the scene before me.

A grander, more extensive, or more unique prospect, I do not believe can be found on earth. I retract nothing I have written about the panorama from the top of Serbál. It is grand, and striking in the extreme; the only drawback there is, that, like Ossa piled on Pelion, the mountains are so huddled together, as to confuse the view and take away the breath; here there is room to breathe; there is a vast foreground; and when the eye begins to scale the heights, the ranges rise like steps of stairs, one above another, the shades growing deeper and deeper, until the blue sky fills in the background. To the man in whose memory a first impression remains indelible, I would say,—unless he intends to return this way—forsake the beaten path of travellers; follow the Haj route from Suez to Nukhl, and thence come down on the Tih, or follow Wadi Gherundel to its source, within a mile or two of the top of Nakb el Rachiney, and let your first view of the southern peninsula be from this point. The loss of time it involves you will never regret, for the impression made will remain as long as memory retains her power. The vast advantage of this view is, that the traveller takes in at a glance the whole peninsula, from the Gulf of Suez to the Gulf of Akabah (though the waters of the latter are not seen); and having marked the relative position which all these mountains bear to one another, he is prepared to examine them in detail from the top of Serbál, or Mousa, or Katerin.

The camels reached the top of the pass at three o'clock, and after a few minutes halt, we continued our journey. From the ledge of the Nakhb, the ground falls away so rapidly towards the NW., that before I had walked fifty yards from it, the whole of the lower peninsula, with its magnificent mountains and tortuous wadis, was completely hidden from view, and nothing was to be seen but undulating cretaceous hills, black with flints and pebbles embedded like Mosaic work on the surface, as in the Egyptian Desert. The range of the Tih, as seen from the other side of Wadi Ramleh in the morning, looked cheerful and airy in comparison with the Desert we had left behind; but there was something dismal in the flat monotony now surrounding us, which made me pine for the bare granite mountains again. The ravens flew to and fro overhead, croaking reproaches against us for invading their solitudes. In the midst of all this desolation, I lighted upon a solitary crocus in full bloom, and was reminded that the Desert is one day to become a fruitful field.

It is a delusion to suppose, as I remember doing before this journey, that the Desert is a vast unbroken sea of fine light dry sand, which the slightest breeze will drive in clouds, threatening to engulf the traveller. There are spots, particularly near the shores of the Mediterranean, about El Arish and Gaza, where much of such fine sand is to be met with; but the prevailing character of the Egyptian Desert, between the Nile and the Red Sea, and of the peninsular Desert of Arabia, is that of a hard bed of gravel, tightly bound together, sinking into valleys and rising into mounds and elevated hills, and thickly sprinkled over (I refer more particularly in this and what follows to the Egyptian Desert) with pebbles of a blackish-yellow hue, from the size of a pigeon's egg to that of a man's head. Mountain ridges of grey limestone and chalk, sometimes of great height, are seen running in different directions; and from the summit of one of those gravel hills, the view of similar hills, rising one beyond another, with corresponding depressions between each, for a whole day's journey, reminds one of the sea as seen from a ship's deck in the Atlantic after a gale. There is monotony in such a scene—without a tree, without a patch of cultivation or a human habitation in view; but yet, though it may seem paradoxical, the variety is wonderful, arising not only from the changing forms and shapes the hills assume as we advance among them, but from the constant change of colours they present from sunrise to sunset. In the wadis, which are the water-courses for the winter rains, there is always a little sand to be found produced by detrition; but any one who has ridden on a good macadamised road at home on a

windy March day, can understand how, from such a surface as that now described, a strong wind may raise sand and fragments of stone sufficient to annoy the traveller exceedingly, without its being necessary to suppose the Desert, throughout its whole extent, a sea of shifting sand.

A quarter of an hour after leaving the summit, we came to the source of the Wadi Gherundel. The course it pursues is exceedingly tortuous, sweeping first to the north-east, then to the north, and finally to the west, wherever it has found easiest passage through the chalky rocks. We found in it several large pools of water, and on scenting them at a distance, the camels—now nine days without supply—burst suddenly into a rough trot to reach them. We followed this wadi for an hour and three quarters, and then crossing a narrow ridge of chalk, came down into the head of another, running towards the E. and NE., called Wadi Metighiney, from which we obtained our first view of the range of Ghebel el Ojmeh, along the base of which we afterwards travelled as far as Nukhl. Like the Tih, it is composed of chalk and jurassic limestone; and illuminated as it was by the rays of the setting sun, it required no great stretch of imagination to fancy it a splendid terrace, laid out with palaces, cathedrals, mosques, and minarets. At 5.50 we halted for the night, beside a solitary palm-tree, at Ain Metighiney—a spring of water, slightly brackish, from which the wadi takes its name. It is on the territory of the Tiahah tribe of Bedouins, and, judging from the large grave yard on the top of one of the mammillary hills close by, it must be a place of great resort; but though the supply of water is so copious, as not only to form a pool, but likewise to send off a stream down the wadi, not the slightest attempt is made at cultivation.

*February 5.*—I had looked forward with delight to spending the Sabbath here; but was obliged to yield to the urgent representations of Nassar, which I ascertained to be correct, that owing to the two days' delay by the storm in Wadi Sheikh, they had barely food for themselves and their camels for the two days it would take us to reach Nukhl; and we set out from Ain Metighiney at half-past nine o'clock. With the exception of the monotonous song, or rather drone, with which the men encouraged the camels from time to time when they got weary, there was the solemn stillness of a Sabbath day all around, and I found profitable employment in reading. Instead of following the windings of Wadi Metighiney, we struck across the country in an easterly direction, to get into Wadi el Arish—the longest wadi in the Desert, as it extends northwards from the Tih to the Mediterranean. From the description Nassar gave me, it seems to take



its rise near the Ras Regimeh, where Ghebel et Tih and Ghebel el Ojmeh meet at right angles. In the same direction is a well called Ain Regimeh, visited by those who cross the Tih by the Mareikhy Pass. Passing through Aregib et Rahab, a very rugged defile, full of pits, formed in the rotten chalky rocks by the action of the atmosphere, we entered Wadi el Arish at a quarter past twelve, and now travelled due north. This wadi is very wide; a large number of stunted tarfa trees and other shrubs grow in it; but throughout the whole day's journey it presented nothing attractive or interesting. At one o'clock we passed the mouth of Wadi Metighiney, but the little stream we left in it had been absorbed far above Wadi el Arish. On the left side of the wadi, where the tarfa trees were most abundant, we passed during the day two parties of the Tiáhah Arabs, employed in burning charcoal; but Nassar, instead of starting off at once to meet them, as he had ever done with those of his own tribe, seemed to feel himself an intruder, and drew as near as possible to the right bank, in order to get along without exciting attention. At 4.35 we had to the left, at a great distance, a chain of lofty hills, which our Arabs insisted was Ghebel et Tih, as it runs up towards Suez; but if they were right, it is much nearer Wadi el Arish than the maps represent it. Another range still nearer, and much lower, our men called Ghebel Souham Badía. At 4.50 the wadi made a long bend to the east; but instead of following it, we continued, in a direct line northward, for another hour, over a dreary plain sown with black flints, without a vestige of vegetation, called Hamát el Berberi. For two hours before we reached it, a high cold wind had blown from the north, driving clouds of sand and minute particles of gravel before it with tremendous force; and lowering clouds betokened the near approach of rain. I wished the Sheikh to stop for the night before it began, but he was anxious, for the sake of getting firewood and pasture for his camels, to push forward for another hour, until we got into the wadi again; and, by yielding to his importunity, we were drenched to the skin ere the tents could be got up. The shower did not last long; and as, fortunately, there was an abundant supply of withered bushes and rotten wood at hand, we managed, by keeping up large fires, to dry our habiliments ere the evening meal was prepared. But at nine o'clock the rain began again, and continued in torrents all night.

*February 6.*—When Shaheen wakened me, the storm had passed, and the sun was shining brightly, but the cold wind continued all day. While sitting at breakfast, a great uproar arose in the servant's tent, in which the whole of the party seemed engaged. It appeared

that, during the night, when the servants were asleep, some of the Bedouins had crept into their tent and stolen some sugar and biscuits which had been carelessly left without being locked up. Shaheen, fearing doubtless a rebuke for his carelessness, had, to use our Scotch proverb, 'taken the first word of flyting,' and the men were alternately denying the charge, and shifting the blame from one to another. I was glad to find that Nassar was in no way implicated; for, notwithstanding his duplicity in some matters, I had formed a most favourable opinion of him.

Opposite to where our tents were pitched, the range of Ghebel el Ojmeh makes a sudden bend to the west, and then resumes its northward course till near Nukhl, when it stretches away to the east, and is lost to sight behind some lower hills in the neighbourhood of the fort. The journey was quite as uninteresting as that of the previous day, scarcely affording even land-marks, whereby it might be traced by a future traveller. At 1.25, we passed to the right an isolated mountain of chalk on the banks of the wadi, called from its resemblance to the Turkish head-dress, *Tarboosh* Argol. Hitherto a long, dark, tolerably straight line had distinguished the course of the wadi from the whitey-brown desert around; but, towards afternoon, the shrubs became more sparse, and the zigzags of the wadi, first eastward then westward, became more frequent, and of longer continuance, so that, instead of following its course, we only crossed its bed from time to time. About six o'clock, we had in view, at three hours' distance, the chalk hills which go by the name of the mountains of Nukhl; but after travelling till we were actually benumbed with cold, and it was no longer possible to trace a path, we had to give up the hope of reaching Nukhl, and at seven o'clock to pitch our tents once more in Wadi el Arish.

*February 7.*—During the night the cold was so intense, that we ran the risk a second time of being frozen in the Desert. In the morning, the water in the zimzimiehs and barrels was solid ice, and, at ten o'clock the ground was still covered thick with hoar-frost, notwithstanding the efforts of a bright sun to chase it away. As we had only about two hours' journey before us, we did not set out till ten o'clock; and having crossed the wadi where it runs to the west, we saw it no more until a couple of days after, when we struck into it again to the north of Nukhl. An hour and a half passed over without anything to break the monotony of the march, except the heat of the sun, which, owing to the cessation of the wind, had become as fierce as the morning air had been bitterly cold. At 11.30, we crossed

the Haj route between Suez and Akabah, along which the caravan of pilgrims to Mecca passes annually. It consisted of about twelve camel tracks tolerably well trodden; but as Nukhl is a station on the road at which the caravan generally halts for a day, the parties composing it scatter round about in all directions; and the road does not form so striking an object, as if we had come upon it some miles farther to the east or west. During the half-hour's ride between the Haj route and the Fort, we had abundant and melancholy proof of the annual sacrifice of life which the expedition involves, in the skulls and mutilated skeletons, both of camels and their riders, which were bleaching in the sun. We encamped about a quarter of a mile below Khalát Nukhl, shortly after noon.

The Arabs had made the whole journey from Cairo to this place on foot, having travelled 19 days out of 25, at an average rate of 21 miles a day. Their sandals were made of a bit of goats' hide, in its green state, cut exactly to the shape of the foot, and fastened round the ankles by cords, reaching from the heels, and passing between the toes. When one pair is worn out, if they have the material at hand, five minutes suffice to manufacture another; if not, they travel barefoot over gravel plains, and rugged mountain passes, as a matter of course. The soles of their feet, by constant attrition, become almost as hard as bone, while at the sides they are cracked and furrowed like a clod of parched earth. The new sandals with which our men started from Cairo, were well worn by the time we got to Ghebel Mousa; and, under the rough walk to which they were exposed afterwards, the remnants completely disappeared, so that, for some days past, they had been walking barefoot, and the sand lodging in the cracks of their hard hoofs, had caused suppuration, more or less, in all of them;—indeed, for the last two days Nassar and another had been compelled to ride together on the spare camel. Footsore and weary, I supposed they would hail with great satisfaction the end of their journey; but, on the contrary, as it approached, Nassar proffered his services to take me to Petra, Hebron, or Gaza, and urgently pressed their acceptance. As the Tiáhah, however, have a right to all 'the carrying trade' within their own territories, such an arrangement could only be made with their consent, and on the payment of an additional sum to their Sheikh, equivalent, or nearly so, to the hire of their camels: which was rather too dear a rate to pay for the privilege of being served by the Towerah. Besides which, Shaheen and I hoped for better cattle by the change; for their camels were weak, half-starved, mangy brutes, and the stench arising from sores on their back, caused by the wooden saddles, was

always perceptible, and at times absolutely overpowering. I therefore told Nassar that we must put ourselves into the hands of the Tiáhah, but should employ him, if they were not able to furnish us with camels, or in case any unforeseen event should cause us to take the road to Gaza, along which the Towerah possess equal carrying rights with the Tiáhah.

The fort scarcely deserves so high sounding a name, as it is in reality nothing more than a large square building, formed of massive stone walls, battlemented at the top, which originally was destined for a barrack to lodge a company of the Pasha's soldiers; but has now been turned into a barrack for the Effendi's harém. As it stands on the slope of a gently rising ground, the side which is seen from the west on approaching is higher than the others, and when contrasted with a small village at its base, presents rather an imposing appearance. The village contains about a couple of dozen one-storied mud huts, each having a court enclosed by an outer wall. The company of soldiers stationed here to intimidate the Bedouins, and protect the Hajees, are the occupants of most of these houses; the rest belonging to a few hucksters, who drive a trade at cent. per cent. during the day the Mecca caravan halts, by selling vegetables, tobacco, fruit, etc. etc., and then collect slowly during the rest of the year, the materials for their next harvest day. Most of the soldiers have small vegetable gardens, the produce of which they readily dispose of on the same occasion. The company consisted of 22 men; but during the time I was encamped there, an order came from the Pasha, that their number was to be reduced by one half, which was rather impolitic, seeing he had produced wide-spread dissatisfaction among the Tiáhah, by an order issued not long before, forbidding them the use of some of their pasture grounds.

We had scarcely begun to pitch our tents, ere the whole male population of the place, the Governor and one or two Arabs who were with him excepted, rushed down in a body amongst us, in a fever of joy at having something to break the dreary monotony of their lives. The first news they communicated was, that the two English gentlemen whom we had been following from Suez, had left on the previous afternoon for Khalíl (Hebron). As I had heard at the convent that they were going to Petra, I fancied that want of time might have caused them to abandon their original plan, and thought no more of the circumstance. The first and most pressing matter was to get hold of the Sheikh of the Tiáhah, and make a bargain with him for the journey to Petra, that the camels might be

sent without delay from their encampment, so as to allow of our continuing our journey if possible on the morrow. For this purpose I despatched Shaheen at once to the Governor of the fort, to ascertain the whereabouts of the Sheikh's tents, and to send off a message that camels might be forthcoming without delay. He soon returned to announce that a Bedouin had been despatched on a dromedary for the Sheikh, whose encampment was about three hours distant to the east; but he also brought news which to me were fraught with deep disappointment. The Governor had told him, that it was utterly impossible for parties to proceed from Nukhl to Petra at that time, because a war had broken out between two tribes in its neighbourhood, the Aláwin and the Howatát, and that the Tiáhah being at war with both, dared not enter the territories of either, without being attacked. He further told him, that the two English gentlemen had determined before their arrival here to go to Petra, but had been obliged to abandon the idea as the Sheikh positively refused to take them. This was bad news for me; nevertheless as private interests sometimes affect the advice of officials here as elsewhere, I still hoped that when the Sheikh made his appearance the journey to Petra might be found practicable, and, meanwhile, there was nothing for it but to wait his arrival.

The granite rocks of Serbál and Mousa had worn out a pair of strong English shoes, which Shaheen volunteered to get mended here, assuring me there was a son of Crispin perfectly capable of putting them in good repair, as he was regimental shoemaker. Judge of my surprise when they were returned within the hour, the soles covered with pieces of goatskin, hair outwards, which had been sewed on with thongs of the same material. I had expected something miserable enough from an Egyptian shoemaker, but was scarcely prepared for untanned goatskin, and leather thongs. In the afternoon I took a stroll, to have a look at the village and the outside of the fort, intending to reserve my visit of ceremony to the Effendi till next day; but after walking up the short dirty street, a sudden turn brought me directly in front of the fort, and of a mound before the portal, on which a dozen Arabs were squatted cross-legged in their *Kefíahs* and striped *Abas*, who at once arose and advanced towards me. One of them who had a fez and a black aba of camel's hair embroidered with gold, I had not at first particularly noticed, but this was the Governor of Nukhl, who making a sign for me to follow, led the way into the fort, the Arabs closing in the procession.

The gateway is about twelve feet in depth, and at the farther end a low door leads into the interior; but we never got beyond the gateway; for here, as in ancient days, was the place of public assembly.

In a small recess hollowed out of the thickness of the wall, the Governor's carpet was spread on a platform of masonry about three feet above the ground; and this place served him for divan, reception hall, and court of justice. Having seated himself tailor fashion, he motioned me to a place by his side; while the Arabs, after their mode, crouched down upon their heels wherever they found room, and without waiting for an invitation, began to light their pipes. From his appearance, I should suppose the Governor to be a man between thirty and forty years of age, of prepossessing manners and appearance, and in the activity of his movements more like a European than an Egyptian. Chibouks were served in due time; but never was man in a more awkward 'fix' than I felt myself placed in. The Effendi could speak no European language, and amongst his followers there was not one who could act as interpreter. My own I had left behind, on culinary thoughts intent, having had no intention to pay a ceremonious visit till next day; and my stock of Arabic, though now sufficient to get along with the Bedouins, was wholly inadequate to sustain a conversation. I told him—to borrow a nautical phrase—whence I hailed, whither bound, and the number of days I had been out; but on the whole, the interview consisted rather in pantomimic signs than in words. We smiled to each other occasionally, and whiffed with mortal energy at our chibouks, to avoid the necessity of speaking. Many of the soldiers had by this time joined the throng, and lighted their pipes with as much *sang froid* as if they had been under the shadow of their own household gods, instead of in the presence of their commander; but not a word was uttered by the whole assemblage. Feeling at last the silence become too oppressive to bear, I told the Governor I would come to-morrow with my *Turgimán*, to pay him a proper visit, and laying aside the pipe, rose to make my *salám*. In this, however, I had reckoned without my host. He had showed me but half hospitality; the pipes had been served, but not the coffee; he begged me to be seated again. This ceremony over, I effected my escape, rejoicing to be free from my embarrassing position; but at the same time regretting my inability to hold free intercourse with such men as the one I had just left, as they always maintain a certain reserve when the conversation has to pass through an interpreter. In the evening Nassar came to ask payment, as they wished to set out the next morning for Suez and Cairo again. By his agreement, he was under obligation to remain at Nukhl for three days; and if, at the end of that time, camels could not be had from the *Tiáhah*, to take me on to Gaza, I therefore refused to pay him until something definite had been fixed respecting our future movements.

## CHAPTER VI.

## NUKHL TO BEERSHEBA.

*February 8.*—One of the Tiáhah with his camel arrived late at night, and slept near the tents, by way, I fancy, of taking possession of us; but the Sheikh had not made his appearance at breakfast time, and there was therefore little hope of getting off during the day. Shaheen had not informed me previous to my visit to the Governor, that the latter had insisted on sending four soldiers to guard my small establishment, because, forsooth! the gentlemen who had just left had had eight; otherwise I should have found Arabic enough to make a remonstrance. As soon as I heard it, I sent him up to protest in my name, that I was still under the care of the Towerah, and had no need of a guard of soldiers. Objections, however, were of no avail. The truth is, these soldiers are irregulars recruited from among the Arabs, whose pay, miserable at best, is generally some months in arrear; hence it is the Governor's custom to recruit their slender resources by levying a contribution on strangers passing this way, under pretence of affording them a guard. The absurdity of guarding travellers at his own gates, who have roamed through the Desert, and camped unscathed amid the Arabs, is a matter of no concern to his Excellency; he requires money to keep his irregulars from murmuring, perhaps from revolt; and the purses of travellers afford the readiest exchequer. For this, and similarly extravagant demands, which have now acquired the force of custom, Englishmen have to thank the full purse, the culpable facility, and perhaps the exaggerated apprehensions, of their own countrymen who have preceded them.

According to promise, I made a visit to the Governor in the forenoon, with all due formality; explained fully through my dragoman how I had chanced to come without my mouth-piece the previous day; and then entered into conversation about the journey to Petra: when

he repeated the information he had already given Shaheen regarding the war now raging between the tribes in its immediate neighbourhood. While thus engaged, two handsome young men, aged respectively about 20 and 25—the brothers of the Sheikh-in-Chief—entered, and joined in the conversation. They wore the gay keffiah, bound on their heads by a rope of camel's hair, and were enveloped in the striped aba, beneath which a sword and pistols were stuck in their leathern girdles. They reiterated the Governor's statement concerning the impossibility of going to Petra; and assured me that, so far from having any interest in refusing to take us that way, they were decided losers by it, as the journey was much longer, and consequently their profit larger, by Petra to Khalil, than by the direct northern road. They further stated, that their attempt to reach Petra would certainly end in the death of some of our escort; and, though my own life might probably be spared, I would infallibly be robbed to my shirt by the contending Arabs. Aware that this was no mere form of speech, and remembering the fate of a gentleman I had met at Cairo, just returned from Aleppo, who had fallen into the hands of the Syrian Bedouins, and been robbed of every article he had but his shirt, I thought discretion the better part of valour, and gave up my plan of visiting the capital of Edom. The disappointment was all the more bitter, on learning afterwards from an American gentleman, whom I met at Beyrout, that he had gone with a party by Akabah, and as the Sheikh of that place was on good terms with the tribes at war, they had experienced no difficulty in visiting Petra. A sad accident, however, befel one of the party; his thigh was fractured by a fall from his camel, and as no one could reduce it, he was obliged to travel in that state to Jerusalem, suffering excruciating agony.

I told the young Sheikhs I was anxious to get to Hebron as quickly as possible, and begged that they would send in the camels at once, that I might get off in the afternoon. On this they rose, and, led by the Effendi, retired through a door not more than three feet high, which led from the gateway in which we sat, to the interior of the fort, where they remained in conversation for five minutes. What the nature of the conversation was, of course we did not learn; but as the Effendi's secretary had camels of his own, two of which he induced the Tiáhah to employ, it struck me afterwards that it was to manage this little matter that the Governor had given them a private audience. On emerging again, they prepared to set out at once for their tents. As they had not given any definite answer about the camels, however, I made Shaheen tell them, that if they were not sent before night I



would assuredly set out with the Towerah for Gaza in the morning, on which they gave us the assurance they would be forthcoming in good time. Our business with the Governor was not yet quite finished. From daylight, Nassar had been insisting on being paid, declaring that his contract was ended, and that he must either get away or have extra payment for the detention of his camels. He admitted that he was bound to remain three days; but reckoning the day twelve hours, he chose to count the twelve hours of night as one of them; and we were obliged to take him to the Governor to have the contract read aloud and interpreted by him. When he found himself in the wrong, and that he was bound to wait all next day, he pretended that it was not he, but his men who were anxious to get away. This matter settled, and the Governor having intimated his intention to return my visit in the evening, when the Sheikh came, and to have the contract drawn up in my tent by his secretary. I took my leave, deputing Shaheen to give the usual backshish to the servants.

I was no sooner beyond the gate, however, than two of the Arab soldiers applied to me to prescribe for their children. How strikingly the customs of these people remind us of those with which we have become familiar since early childhood in the blessed Bible, and what striking evidence they bear of its genuineness! The Syro-Phœnician woman applied to Jesus, though a perfect stranger to her, for the healing of her daughter, on account of the fame he had acquired for curing diseases of every kind. The father of the poor lad possessed with the deaf and dumb and unclean spirit, applied for his relief first to the disciples and then to their Master, in the neighbourhood of the Mount of Transfiguration, with these words, 'If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us;' and because an idea has gone abroad in the Desert that the Franks are all more or less acquainted with the healing art, we find its inhabitants at this day bringing their sick to the stranger with the request that he will heal them, just as the Jews did to our blessed Lord 1800 years ago. In thus illustrating a Bible custom still existing unchanged, I trust it is not necessary to guard myself against the charge of putting the miraculous healing powers of the Son of God on a level with the skill even of the most distinguished disciples of Galen, or of insinuating that the multitudes were not fully aware that it was by 'the finger of God' that He healed all manner of disease.

One of the cases was that of a poor motherless boy, about five years old, of decidedly scrofulous habit, ill-fed and dirty, with chronic diarrhœa of a year's standing, which had reduced him to a perfect

skeleton. His father, the ensign-bearer to the company stationed at the fort, brought him in his arms. The other case was still more hopeless; it was that of a boy of ten years of age, who had had measles six months before, and whom the disease had left perfectly powerless in the left leg from the hip-joint downward. He also was sadly emaciated, and in a deplorable state of filth. A smattering of medical knowledge—acquired in youth from one who had attained no mean eminence as a physician, and often afterwards called into practice when I was a parish minister in Scotland—enabled me to suggest some simple remedies. In the latter case, the boy was at home; and to this circumstance I am indebted for a glance into an eastern harém. The father, also a soldier, ran after me down the street, when I was quite alone, and brought me back to the door of his house, which he threw open. As he had not uttered a word beyond the invitation, *Howajee taal henne*, ‘Master come here,’ I understood at once, from being thus favoured, that it was as Hakím my services were wanted. The outer door opened into a clean and well-kept court, formed like the threshing floors in Italy, by a layer of mud evenly laid, and then hardened by the sun. Along the northern wall were built several small sleeping-rooms, the doors of which being open, discovered in each the usual mud-built divan, on which one or two blankets were spread. A room, separate from these, attached to the western wall, seemed to be the general family apartment. By the door of one of the sleeping-rooms the poor patient lay on a pillow basking in the sun. In front of these rooms, five females were sitting on the ground sifting Indian corn, and preparing to grind it for the evening meal; and as there was no one introduced by the *padrone* but the Frank, none of them deemed it necessary either to retire or to cover their faces with the *yashmak*. Two of the women were older than the rest; but whether they both stood in conjugal relation to the old greybeard beside me, I was not there to inquire, and no information was volunteered. The three girls were probably between the ages of thirteen and twenty; one of them was really beautiful, her olive complexion being relieved by the ruddy glow of health which crimsoned her cheeks, while her chin was not deformed, and the whole aspect of her countenance changed, by the *khol* with which all the women of Egypt and the Desert have that part of their face tattooed. These youngsters laughed heartily at my attempts to get at the nature of the boy’s complaint by a medley of Arabic and Italian, interspersed with signs. The visit being paid, I got to the outer door just as Shaheen passed by, who looked exceedingly astonished at seeing his master emerge from an Arab habitation.

I called him in to interpret; but no sooner had he and another Arab entered than a great fuss began among the women; some ran off into the hareém, and the rest veiled themselves very closely.

In the afternoon a second camel arrived, and with it a stout little Bedouin, with high colour in his cheeks and long plaited tresses of hair hanging down, like a woman's, from either temple. His wardrobe, like Nassar's, consisted of the long-sleeved cotton garment, a fez, and a blue bernouse. His name, I was informed, was Menhazen—a Sheikh of one of the clans of the Tiáhah, and destined to be my guide to Hebron. About sundown the Governor, true to his promise, was seen approaching with his secretary and a train of fifteen or sixteen Arabs. From what I had observed in his audience-hall, I knew that I was destined to have as many of these crammed into my tent as it would hold; and fearing lest they should leave reminiscences behind—the very thought of which made me shudder—I had scarcely time to shut up the bedstead and stow it behind the table, before his Excellency arrived. Presenting one of the camp-stools to him, and seizing the other for myself, I left his followers to appropriate the portmantaus, or to squat on the mat, and, when the tent was full to suffocation, to form a semicircle round the door. Without having complied with the usual ceremonies, it was vain to think of business; but as I had no idea of allowing my chibouks to be passed from mouth to mouth, I made Shaheen explain that our stock was limited to two, which I required for the use of the Effendi and myself, but that as most of them were provided with their own pipes, I begged they would consider my tobacco at their service and puff away, an invitation which required no repetition.

With the tiny *fingáns*, it took a weary time before coffee was served to all; but at last we got to business. The contract made with Nassar at the British Consulate at Cairo, was produced and read; and the secretary drawing his ink-horn from his girdle, and using his knee as a writing-table, began to copy it with a reed pen, making such alterations as the nature of the case required. It was stipulated that I was to be taken to Hebron in seven days, passing El Anjeh and Bir es Saba. The terms have been already stated in the introductory chapter. This done, the document was handed to me for my signature; after which, Sheikh Menhazen's seal, bearing his name in Arabic characters, was applied as in the former case at Cairo, the only difference being, that while Nassar kept his own seal, those of the Tiáhah Sheikhs are kept by the Governor of Nukhl, so that no contract can be ratified without passing through his hands. The secretary's claim for his

share in the work was 27 piastres, about 5s. Whilst we were thus employed, three more of the camels arrived; and Menhazen, after a short absence, returned to announce that the Sheikh el Kebeir was coming to pay me a visit in the morning, and would bring the remaining two with him.

My guests now took their departure, and a general purification of the tent followed. Nassar was paid the sum which had been agreed upon, and a backshish was given to him and to each of his men, with which they seemed highly pleased, as they now declared they would wait another whole day if I wished it. They were going straight to Cairo by the Haj road, in the hope of falling in with another party of travellers, as it was still early in the season. Mr Lieder had particularly requested me to send him news as to the state of the Desert. I wrote, therefore, telling him my disappointment about Petra, and recommending Nassar, as he had served me well. In taking leave of the Towerah Arabs, it is but fair to mention that, besides finding them always obliging, I was particularly gratified with the readiness they displayed to give me all the information in their power.

*February 9.*—Shaheen had declared overnight that we should be off by 7 o'clock; but breakfast passed, and 9 o'clock came, and neither the Great Sheikh nor the camels had made their appearance. *Pazienza!* A messenger arrived from the encampment shortly after 9, bringing tidings that this Desert Prince would be with us at 10 o'clock; so the work of striking tents, and packing up, began. Ten o'clock came, and with it, punctually, the Sheikh. Some of the camels were already loaded, and all the gear packed up, so that apologies became necessary for not being able to receive him with the usual civilities, viz., pipes and coffee. He took a cigar instead, as did his uncle who accompanied him, and seemed to think it no bad substitute. Aéed Ibn Achmet, the Sheikh el Kebeir of the Tiáhah tribe was a youth of eighteen years of age—the youngest of three brothers; and as the office of ruler of the tribe is bestowed on one of the sons of the last chief by election, and not by right of primogeniture, he being reckoned the bravest and best qualified to command, was chosen over the heads of his brethren, the two young men I had met at the fort. His father, the last Sheikh, was called Abou Khéleh; and the true title of this youth, according to all European notions, ought to be Aéed Ibn Abou Khéleh, Aéed the son of Abou Khéleh, but among the Bedouins, when this title is given to a man, the father is ignored altogether, and he is called the son of his grandfather, whatever the name of that worthy may have been. In this case the

grandfather's name was Achmet, and hence the style of the young Sheikh, Aéed Ibn Achmet. His attire was rich and costly, and such as I had expected from the accounts of former travellers to have seen Nassar arrayed in, when our first introduction took place at Cairo. He wore on his head, bound by a rope of camel's hair, the gay *kefiyah*<sup>1</sup> the manufacture of Mecca, which is so much valued in the Desert. Over his shoulders hung a blue bernouse; beneath it a long loose robe of scarlet cloth; and below that, fitting close to the body, a tunic or gown of rich crimson silk striped with yellow, from the looms of Damascus. Yellow boots and slippers completed his costume.

It was not many months since his father had been killed; and as he fell a victim to a breach of the well-known laws of Bedouin hospitality, I give here the story as it was told us by Menhazen on the journey. Haj Younes Achmet, the Sheikh of el Arish, had been high in favour with Abbas Pasha; but some one having brought an evil report of him to the ears of his Highness, the latter determined to get him into his power, and send him into confinement in one of the towns of Upper Egypt. As he was head of a formidable tribe, the execution of this purpose was not an easy matter. By bribes and flattery he at length induced Abou Khéleh, the intimate friend of Younes, to attempt his capture. In the autumn of 1853, Abou Khéleh went one day, accompanied by a number of his tribe, to the tent of Younes; was received and entertained as a friend; and when Younes at night had accompanied him in patriarchal fashion a few steps from the door of his tent, the Tiáhah chief tried to seize him and bind his hands. Sheikh Younes had probably had his suspicions previously aroused, for he instantly drew a pistol from his girdle, and shot Abou Khéleh through the head. There is a blood feud now between the Tiáhah and the tribe of the el Arish in consequence; and should Younes fall within the power of Abou Khéleh's relatives, his life will pay the forfeit, and none dare avenge him. To escape this fate, as well as a sejour in one of the Pasha's prisons, he has fled to some of the tribes in the north of Syria, and taken up his abode with them.

Shortly after the Sheikh's arrival, the Governor and his secretary also appeared upon the ground; and for a whole hour there was a scene of blustering and swearing and screaming defiance at one another, which baffles description. I observed that young though Aéed be, he

<sup>1</sup> A square handkerchief woven with red and yellow silk, and cotton fringed round the edges. From this word the Italian word *Cuffia*, a cap, is derived.

knows how to command, and his word is law with his people. When the quarrelling got so vehement as to threaten a recourse to blows, he rose, and, advancing towards the combatants, by a few firm and well-timed words, put an end to the fray. Both he and the Governor were wholly unarmed; and so far as outward appearances went were on friendly terms. After so minute a description of the Sheikh, it may as well be mentioned here, that the long spears which are usually described as being as inseparable from the Bedouin, as the club and lion's skin were from Hercules, are confined to the Syrian Arabs, and are wholly unused by the Towerah and Tiáhah. Many a caravan and encampment of both we passed on our journey; but the first spear I saw was after we had fairly entered the land of Palestine. At eleven o'clock the farewell salám was exchanged, and I mounted a white camel, a respectable matron within a month of her confinement. On venturing to suggest that it was very cruel in such circumstances to take her so long a journey, I was assured that it was good for her, and that I need have no scruples in riding her. One discovers at a glance that the Tiáhah are a more warlike race than the Towerah; every man of our party had his matchlock hung on his shoulders, and several carried swords and pistols besides.

Passing to the back of the fort, we fell again after half an hour's ride, into the Wadi el Arish, and journeyed for a considerable time along its course to the north-east. In it I observed the first attempts at field cultivation we have met with since leaving the valley of the Nile. This no doubt is attributable to the demand produced by the annual visit of the Haj caravan to Nukhl; and were similar opportunities of disposing of produce afforded elsewhere, I have no doubt the Bedouins, with all their affected contempt for agriculture, would soon find out other spots quite as capable of bearing grain. Several patches of ground in the bed of the wadi had been ploughed up ready for the seed; others were already sown, and in one place we met a lad ploughing with a camel, which went most quietly in the yoke. The plough was the most primitive that can be imagined; nothing more than a forked branch of a tarfa tree. To one end of the principal branch the camel is made fast; a stick is inserted into a hole in the other end, by which the ploughman supports his plough; while the other branch, about a foot and a half in length, does duty for a ploughshare. The displacement of the soil caused by this light instrument was not more than an inch in depth; yet I am told they have fair crops when there is an average fall of rain. Rude as was the whole operation, it was pleasant to behold once more the signs of

industry, especially when practised by the Bedouins. Further on, where Wadi Rouag joins Wadi el Arish, there is a large expanse of level ground covered with tarfa trees, and other bushes, among which, after a month's survey of gravel plains and rocky desolation, it was an unspeakable delight for the eye to rest once more on waving crops of green corn. On expressing the pleasure I felt at seeing they had begun to cultivate the land, our men told me it was the garden of their tribe, as Feiran of the Towerah; but that they had lately received orders from the Pasha to remove away two days' journey from Nukhl on every side, as he required Wadi el Arish for the pasture of his camels. They vowed, however, that if he put his threat in execution, they would leave this quarter altogether, and establish themselves in Syria, so as to be no more subject to the ruler of Egypt.

During this day we had the range of Ghebel Yalack to the left or NW., apparently about a day's journey distant. It seems to run north, with a slight inclination to the east. To my surprise, at 3.30, the new Sheikh announced that we were to sleep in the Wadi el Arish; and in answer to my remonstrances on the earliness of the hour, he first gave as a reason, that there was rain water close at hand; next, that his tent was near; and finally, that the Tiáhah had fixed places for halting every night, and never went beyond them. I alighted without more ado, but only determined, since such was the case, that instead of rising before the sun to be off at their pleasure, my friends should journey a little later in the afternoon for mine. Menhazen had gone on in advance about half an hour before we reached the sleeping ground, and was there to receive us, accompanied by a small sheep, which he dragged to the tent-door the moment it was pitched, and presented to me. I told him I was grateful to him for his hospitality, but begged he would spare himself the expense, as I would take the will for the deed. No! it was the custom of his tribe always to show hospitality to strangers, and he would be dishonoured in their eyes, if he neglected it. He drew his knife to kill the poor animal forthwith, at the tent-door; and it was with no small difficulty that I got him to transfer this sacrifice to hospitality to the door of the servants' tent, instead of mine. The larger portion of course went to the Bedouins themselves; but there were no songs or dances as heretofore, to be-token satisfaction or gratitude!

They gathered round the fire at my tent-door that night however, as they continued to do on each successive one, and seemed most anxious to obtain information about England. Shaheen was holding forth, as I issued from my *sanctum*, in favour of England, as a country

where everything was made, and whose manufactures were the best in the world. That was easy, they said, because England was so rich; but they wanted to know where we got all the gold we had? Shaheen's prompt answer was, that we worked for it; that one made arms, another cloths, a third sugar; and that our ships carried what we made to all parts of the world for sale. Why, then, said they, can we not do it? Ah! you want education altogether, said Shaheen, and you can't do these things without being taught; you must first learn to read, and write, and think. Very different was the reception this short address on education obtained from these rough fellows, from that given to mine by the Towerah! They all began to shout out with one voice—*L'Allah, L'Allah*. 'No, by Allah.' 'Ah!' said he, 'you think and care for nothing but the rain, and your camels;' an impeachment to which they pled guilty, with something resembling triumph. Turning from Shaheen to me, they were anxious to know if the Howajee lived in a tent, or a house in Frangistan? Whether the houses were like those of Nukhl? Whether English women wore the yashmak as the Bedouins do? Their expressions of wonder were most amusing, especially when I attempted to give them some notion of the size of London; while the puzzled expression of countenance—denoting curiosity battling with fear—as they handled my pocket compass, indicated that, in their estimation, it evidently was not *canny*. After sitting a while quietly ruminating, Menhazen at length asked, how it was, since the English were so learned, and could do so many things, that they did not believe in Mahomet? I told him that we believed in God, and in His Holy Word; that, as God said nothing there about Mahomet as a Prophet, we could not believe in him; but that He taught us to believe in *Isa*, who is not only the greatest Prophet that ever came to this earth, but who is the Son of God. How far my Mohammedan interpreter conveyed faithfully my answer to the Arabs I am unable to say, as I could not follow him; but this put an end to the conversation.

*February 10.*—The wind was so cold again this morning as to be perfectly benumbing, while, in the middle of the day, the heat was greater than on the hottest day of an Italian summer. The sound of shrill voices, apparently in angry conversation with the Bedouins, awoke me, and, on looking out of an aperture in the tent, I saw two women by the camp-fire, who turned out to be the wife of the Sheikh, and the mother of a little boy to whom one of the camels belonged, who had come to commend him to the care of the dragoman, and to beg that he might be allowed occasionally to ride on one of the camels,



as she feared so long a journey on foot would be too much for him. The little urchin seemed not more than twelve years old, though the Arabs could not tell his exact age. A ragged shirt and greasy fez constituted all his attire, yet he is proprietor of two camels, and a considerable number of sheep. His father is dead, and he is head of a house among the tribe. His uncle had started with us from Nukhl yesterday, but left during the night, as he had to watch the seed he had sown, and objected to take so young a boy, not only for his own sake, but because it deprived us of a hand in loading, pitching tents, etc.; the Sheikh, however, pled hard for him, promising that he and the other men would do all that was requisite by the way, and the point was yielded. Another of my escort, who drove one of the secretary's camels, had twice made the journey to Mecca in the caravan, and was, in consequence, always addressed Haj Mohammed. Madame Menhazen had, I imagined, come as a dutiful wife, to bid her husband God speed! I confess to feelings of surprise and indignation, when Shaheen announced that she had come to ask payment for the sheep which her husband had presented in token of hospitality last night, and which the servants and Bedouins had devoured among them. The dragoman got rid of her by saying that I should arrange with her husband, and I resolved to reserve what I had to say on the matter till our final reckoning at Hebron.

We were now travelling by the great caravan road between Cairo, Suez, and Hebron. During most of the day, our path was over a gravelly surface, composed of flints and round black stones, embedded in a cretaceous matrix. The hills around were all covered with flints which have been set free by the decomposition of the chalk. There was not a vestige of vegetation to be seen all day except the stunted shrubs in the beds of the wadis which crossed our path. At 9.40 we finally bade farewell to Wadi el Arish, which runs away north parallel to the range of Ghebel Yallack, and took a north-easterly direction towards Ghebel Kharim, the most prominent object in the landscape before us. Another range of hills was seen in the distance beyond it, which I afterwards found was the most westerly part of Ghebel Halal. Its bearing from the Wadi Abu Ghedel, which we crossed at 10.5, is a very little to the east of north. Here also we observed, over the top of an intervening ridge of chalk hills, a solitary blue mountain rising in the east called Ghebel Araif. At 10.45 we crossed the Wadi Er Agebah, which runs to the north-west, and falls into Wadi el Arish; and, at 1.20, we came to a pass in a ridge of broken chalk rocks of very rapid descent, called Metalla tel Fahadi.

which brought us into Hamat el Fáhadi, a plain of great extent. On our right, nearly due east, we now had a range of cretaceous hills called Luchob Gheháme. Beyond them, and probably twenty miles distant, was Ghebel Araif; before us, but a little to the left, Ghebel Kharím; and between the latter and Araif, Ghebel Amazarát, shut in the view to the north-east.

In this plain the heat was intense. The surface of the ground, or rather the atmosphere for a few feet above it, appeared to the eye to simmer like the contents of a boiling pot over a slow fire, and when a slight current of colder air swept along now and then the same waving appearance was produced, as is seen on a field of corn when a strong wind passes over it. After we had advanced into the plain about a mile, I saw a beautiful lake of water, with graceful palm trees waving over its banks, and reflected in its surface. The Abyssinian at the same time began to shout *Moié Moié*. It was, however, only the Serab, the mirage of the Desert. It dissolved slowly, breaking up into many small lakes and patches of water. One of the Tiáhah, who had seen the caravan at a short distance, came racing after us on a fleet young camel, to salute his brethren and hear their news.

Poor Hanna had an adventure during the day which convulsed us all with laughter. The grate, kettle, pots and pans, and other culinary utensils, had been hung on a young camel, not well broken in and vicious withal, which had been assigned to Hanna on the principle, I fancy, of not separating the workman from his tools. After frequent disputes which should have the upper hand, Hanna at last applied a cudgel with such effect that the animal set off roaring, at a furious pace, enlivened every now and then by a bound, which made the poor fellow stot like a ball from his seat, and eventually scattered his bedding and culinary utensils over half a mile of ground. The shrieks of the master, who found the game was all against him, the bounds of his Pegasus, as he tore along, screeching like a steam-engine, and the flapping and rattling of a Desert kitchen service on his flanks; which, like a kettle at a dog's tail, made his evolutions more frantic, presented a scene so intensely ludicrous, that when I recall it, even at this distance of time, it calls forth peels of laughter. It took some time to gather up the *disjecta membra*, and for the rest of the journey Hanna foreswore the use of the cudgel.

We directed our way across this plain of Fahadi towards the eastern point of Ghebel Kharím, and as we approached it entered into the Wadi Fahadi, where, though it was only half-past four o'clock, Menhazen said we were to halt for the night.

*February 11.*—We left the foot of Ghebel Kharím this morning at 9.30, and after proceeding a little way down the Wadi Fahadi, got again into the plain called Hamat el Fahadi, which we had been traversing all the previous afternoon. It was broken by occasional *tells* or conical mounds of chalk, but was entirely destitute of vegetation. At 10.35 we entered another very broad wadi, running from SE., called Wadi Kuréyah (pronounced also Gereiyah), which, like the previous one, falls into Wadi el Arish. We had now left Ghebel Kharím quite behind us to the west, and far beyond it, in the same direction, the outline of Ghebel Yallack was still visible, together with another chain which seemed to be a continuation of it to the north, called Ghebel Makhara. These I estimated at forty miles distant from Wadi Kureiyah. Ghebel Halál bore directly north from this wadi, its general course being from SW. to NE., while between it and Ghebel Makhara, there are no hills as represented in most of the maps, but a flat plain through which Wadi el Arish runs onward to the sea. I have been more particular in mentioning the names and positions of localities in this part of my route, because none of the maps which I have had an opportunity of consulting are correct in the configuration of this portion of the Desert. Passing over another barren plain, broken like the former one by mounds of chalk, we came at 1.50 to a chain of cretaceous hills running from E. to NW., which bore the name of Ghebel es Shureif, through which the camels made their way with some difficulty into another larger plain, through the middle of which runs the Wadi Muchsan. We had now left the mountains Burgáh and Araif behind us to the right, bearing E. by SE., while another range called Ghebel el Enéga bore east, apparently a continuation of Ghebel Araif.

As Ghebel Halál seemed not more than four hours distant, I began to question our guides whether there was any Well known to them at the foot of Halál or on its sides, and learned that near the top of the western shoulder of the mountain there is a spring called Ain el Khádes. They said that no camels could approach it, but that a man, with a water-skin slung on his back, could get at it by climbing with his hands and feet. This differs very widely from the glowing description given of it by the Rev. Mr Rowlands, in a letter which appears in the appendix of his friend Mr Williams' book,<sup>1</sup> though it is probable they can be reconciled by supposing the stream by which he encamped, to come down from the spring near the summit.

<sup>1</sup> Williams' Holy City, vol. i., p. 434.

From the similarity of sound, Mr Rowlands suggests that this probably was the position of Kadesh Barnea, though had he reflected, the scriptural indications concerning the position of that place might have convinced him that Kadesh Barnea could not possibly lie so far to the west.

In Wadi Muchsan we observed the first traces of herbaceous growth, in the shape of thistles and weeds, and now and then of a solitary wild flower; and the delight which they afforded would be reckoned absurd by those who have no experience of the weariness occasioned to the eye by gazing for weeks incessantly on rock, or sand, or gravel. At four o'clock we passed a huge block of chalk rock, having all the appearance of the capital of a gigantic Ionic pillar embedded in the ground, which the Arabs called *Tor en Makháfer*, and half-an-hour afterwards we entered Wadi el Burgáh. In each of the three last wadis we passed through large herds of camels, apparently unattended; but in Wadi Burgáh we came upon some flocks of goats, tended by women—a sure sign that their tents were not far distant. As our caravan advanced through Wadi Burgáh, we observed two women more than a mile off, walking rapidly as if to meet us, and at the same time one of our men sat down to wait their arrival. On their approach he rose, and kissed one of them several times, whom I afterwards learned was his sister. Her husband's tent was in the neighbouring wadi. On asking Menhazen the name of the wadi in which we were to sleep, I was startled to receive for answer Wadi Gerúr. I had seen Wadi Jerur marked on the maps, but had paid no particular attention to it; but, when the Sheikh, giving the hard sound to the letter *g*, and that of *ou* to the letter *u*, pronounced it Gerúr, the identity in sound with the Scriptural Gerar was so complete, that it aroused anew my flagging interest in the Desert journey, and led me to the conclusion, which subsequent examination has most strongly confirmed, that I was to pitch my tent within the boundaries of the ancient kingdom of Abimelech.

At 5.50 we crossed over another low ridge of chalk hills, called Abou Zeragat, and entered Wadi Gerúr—a valley of great breadth, and in several places under cultivation. Here, for the first time, I observed several plants of the modest star of Bethlehem in full flower, and something like a sward of grass, though nowhere else would it deserve the name. This indicates a soil capable of production, and also the presence of more moisture than we have yet observed in the Desert. When we had advanced into the wadi about half a mile, the word was given to halt, and the tents were pitched. About a quarter of a mile

from the tents some chalk cliffs rise in the valley towards the east; and, while the evening meal was being made ready, I ascended them, to make myself fully acquainted with the bearings of the country. These separate Wadi Lassán from Gerúr, just before it falls into the latter; but the Arabs speak of them both as Wadi Gerúr. The latter seems to take its rise at Ghebel Burgáh, to the east: makes a bend to the south by the base of the Abou Zeregát cliffs, which we crossed on entering it; from thence it turns for a little to the north; and, finally, takes a NW. direction, sweeping the base of Ghebel Halál to join Wadi el Arish. Besides Wadi Lassán, one or two other wadis from the NE. fall into it; so that, looking from Abou Zeregát, it is six miles at least across this wadi, to the base of Ghebel Halál. Wadi Lassán is laid down in most of the maps as nearer Nukhl than Wadi Gerúr, while the opposite is the true state of the case. There were many tents of the Tiáhah in this valley, and their flocks and herds wandered about in all directions.

*February 12.*—This day was given to spiritual exercises and bodily rest. In the afternoon Saíd's sister came to visit him; but, as all the men had set out, shortly after mid-day, in search of their camels, which had strayed many miles away, she sat down quietly by the camp fire, and chatted away with the servants, till their return, suckling her child the while. Shaheen at length called me out of the tent, to see something that would astonish me, which it certainly did. It was the baby's cradle. It consisted of a piece of goats'-hair cloth, about three feet long and a foot and a half broad, sewed on to a wooden rod at each end. The cloth was then doubled, like a lady's work-bag, and the rods being brought together, were fastened by a piece of goats'-hair rope, which the mother wore round her neck, or, as she showed me, more commonly round her forehead, supporting the bag on her back, just as the Newhaven fisherwomen carry their creels. A tiny bell was attached to one of the rods, I suppose by way of ornament. The sides were perfectly open. The child, nearly in a state of nudity, lay on its back in the bottom of this bag, without any pillow, its head projecting a little at one side, and its feet at the other. She told us she carried the child thus all day long, while tending her goats; when it required the breast, she had but to slew this knapsack round, and, after nature's cravings were satisfied, the burden was re-adjusted in a moment.

I observed that her yashmak was more adorned than any I had yet seen; but as it was getting dusk I could not make out whether it was with silver coins or some other ornaments. I therefore went up close

to her as she sat by the fire, when putting her hand to the ornaments, she exclaimed *Bahr*, 'the sea,' and I perceived they were rows of small white shells, of the cowrie species, sewed round the border of her yashmak. Among the Tiáhah women, the custom—prevalent among the Towerah women—of wearing the hair twisted into the form of a horn in front of the forehead, is not adopted. This woman and Menhazen's wife both wore a broad band of cloth around the forehead, for the purpose of supporting the yashmak; and from above it the long black hair, plaited into tresses, was fastened at either temple so as to hang down to the shoulders. The Sheikh's wife had all the upper part of her head plastered thick with butter. Her yashmak, which was bordered with small silver coins (half piastres), was fastened to the cloth band round her forehead, and at the lower edge to a ring on each shoulder, by two or three small silver chains. Round her neck she wore a necklace composed of half a dozen rows of large blue glass beads, but she had neither bracelets nor anklets. The Tiáhah women seem to be franker than those of the Towerah; for while I never observed an instance in which the latter sat with the men round the camp fire, the former came and chatted with them wherever we pitched our tents in the neighbourhood of their encampments. A poor lad afflicted with epilepsy came to the tent during the day to solicit a cure, and retired much disappointed when he learned the Frank could do nothing for him.

*February 13.*—We left our camping ground in Wadi Gerúr at 8.50. At seven o'clock a strong wind began to blow from the west, bringing along with it a thick mist, which obscured all the surrounding mountains, and continued during the greater part of the day, greatly limiting the view. Our course was a little to the east of north. I had set out on foot before the kafilah got in motion, and was about half a mile in advance, when a Bedouin, apparently about fifty, came running towards me, and, after exchanging the usual saláms, sat down under a retem bush and beckoned me to do the same. This I declined, showing him by signs, that I was going on before my party. He then told me he had come as a patient, and drawing up his garment so as to expose his leg from the hip downwards, lo! 'he was a leper white as snow!' I often afterwards saw in Jerusalem, Nablous, and Damascus, the poor creatures who now go by the name of lepers, and whose disease seems to resemble elephantiasis; but this case was altogether different. There was no enlargement of the joints, or disfigurement of the shape of the limb; it was the veritable leprosy of Scripture, and the literal and appropriate description of

the flesh is 'white as snow.' The disease had not yet spread over the whole thigh, though very nearly so; but where it had extended, the flesh was as white as the paper on which I write, and the contrast between the parts thus affected and the dark bronze colour of the healthy skin around was very striking, especially where the latter was disappearing under the advancing disease. It was only a few months, he said, since this malady had begun. I shook my head, and told him I could do nothing for him. The poor fellow no longer objected to my proceeding on my journey; and when I looked back a few minutes after, he was running back towards the black tents of his people, a disappointed man. This then is the leprosy with which the prophetess Miriam was smitten in this Desert, and King Uzziah by the altar in the house of the Lord. It was men such as he who used to herd together in former days, as outcasts, in the neighbourhood of the cities and villages of Israel, and were compelled to give warning to all who approached of their state, by shouting out the words, 'Unclean, unclean.'

It has been already mentioned that the broadest part of Wadi Gerúr is to the NW., after it has received several other wadis; but as our course lay more to the east, we crossed over the ridge of chalk rocks and entered Wadi Lassán at 9.30, about a quarter of a mile above the place of junction. This valley is of considerable breadth, and contains a great number of dwarf tarfa trees. I had made minute inquiries yesterday, not only from our escort, but also from some aged men who came to visit us, whether any ruins were to be found in this neighbourhood. Dr Robinson, in his work, and Dr Wilson, in his map, place *Lysa*, a station on the Roman road between Gaza and Ailah, at the head of Wadi Lassán, I suppose from a fancied resemblance between the names; but all my informants gave the same answer, that there were no ruins in all this neighbourhood, except those of El Aujeh, which lie on our route, and which Dr Robinson supposes to have been the ancient Eboda. The finest view of the extent of Gerúr is had from this point, and taken in connection with other wadis which we crossed shortly after, may be described as an immense plain well worthy to give a name to a kingdom, principality, or sheikhdom, such as Abimelech possessed. We left Wadi Lassan at 10.20, and passing over some low sand hills, entered Wadi Saisab, from which we passed into Wadi Jaifeh at 10.55, and finally into Wadi Mohéileh at 11.50. All these run into Wadi Gerúr, which carries off their waters to El Arish.

Wadi el Arish is to the upper Desert precisely what Wadis Sheikh

and Feiran are to the lower one, viz., the great duct whereby, in time of floods, the surplus water of all the wadis in this quarter is carried down to the Mediterranean. To enumerate the various water-courses running into it during the three days that we journeyed from the neighbourhood of its source, at the Tih mountains, to the place where we left it, five hours to the north of Nukhl, would be impossible; but from that point, to Wadi Mohéileh inclusive, we crossed no less than eight very large wadis coming from the east, which eventually fall into it. It has been supposed by many that 'the River of Egypt,' mentioned so often as the south-western boundary of the land of Israel, was the Pelusiac branch of the Nile, and not without a semblance of probability, if the river Sihor, mentioned by Joshua (Joshua xiii. 3) in describing the land still remaining to be conquered, must be identified with the Nile; but, having regard to the meaning of the particular word selected in the Hebrew text to denote this river, out of a copious collection in use to distinguish streams of various kinds, it seems impossible to doubt that Wadi el Arish was the boundary intended by that phrase.<sup>1</sup>

Our course had been nearly due north from the time we entered Wadi Lassán; and now, the mist clearing away a little, revealed to us close at hand the sharp naked crags of Ghebel Mishrag to the left, and Ghebel Barabir el Mohéileh to the right, one of the shoulders of which presents the appearance of a high mound of powdered chalk, crowned with a large mass of brown rock. Wadi Mohéileh is a narrow pass between the two, and through it runs one of the principal roads from the south of Judea into Egypt. Following the course of this wadi we soon came to a deep pool of rain-water, hollowed out of the limestone rocks, to which our Arabs gave the name of Amruamra. The Rev. J. Rowlands, in his journey from Jerusalem to Suez, passed this place, and wrote to his friend Mr Williams that in the name of the

<sup>1</sup>The Hebrew word employed in Joshua xv. 4 is נַחַל מְצַרִּים. *Nahal Metzirim*. Parkhurst gives the signification of the word *Nahal* to be, '1st, a vale or valley, and, 2d, torrents or temporary streams, χειμῶνες ποταμοί (winter torrents), common to eastern countries, formed by snow or rain, many of which flow only in winter, and are dry in summer.' The perfect agreement between the meaning of this word *Nahal* and the actual condition of Wadi el Arish, taken in connection with the fact that it never is used in Scripture for the Nile, leaves little room to doubt that the former is the River of Egypt, and would likewise lead to the conclusion that to it, as one of the streams of Egypt, Joshua, in the passage above quoted, gives the name of Sihor, which is usually applied to the Nile.



wadi he thought he had discovered the well of Lahai-roi, by the side of which Hagar sat when first driven forth by Sarah from the tent of her master. 'About ten hours beyond Rohébeh,' he says, 'on our road is a place called Moilahi or Moilahhi, a grand resting-place of the caravans, there being water here, as the name implies. It lies in one of two or three passages or openings in the very southernmost hills or southern border of the land of promise, which form the grand outlet from Palestine into the Desert, or the grand entrance from the Desert into Palestine, by which the great caravan roads from Akabah, Mount Sinai, and Suez pass to Hebron and to Gaza. It may be ten or fifteen miles to the ENE. from the nearest extremity of Mount Halál. Shall I not please you when I tell you that we found here Bir Lahai-roi? We slept one night close to the water. I remembered how much you had talked about Bir Lahai-roi during our journey to the south, and what desire you had to find it; now I can tell you that I have found it, to my entire satisfaction. I have no doubt about it whatever.'

I doubt whether those who know that this gentleman places Kadesh, which, according to Scripture, was on the border of Edom, some fifteen or twenty miles to the west of the place he here describes, and consequently far to the SW. of Gaza, will rest with as entire satisfaction on his discovery as he and his friend have done, especially as his proofs are by no means of so strong a kind as to remove all doubt. 'The well,' he says, 'has disappeared, and the Bir (well) very naturally has been changed into Moie (water); and what is very remarkable, the Arabs of the country call et Moilahhi Hadjar (Hagar).' If asked whether this was the Moie Hagar, I have no doubt the Arabs would readily enough respond in the affirmative, as they are always ready to do when a leading question is thus put to them; but of this I am certain, that Menhazen and the others who accompanied me, though Arabs of the country, knew it by no such name, but called the pool of water, as above stated, Anruamra. His whole theory is based upon the misspelling of the name of the wadi. It is not *Moilahhi*, the latter part of which bears a resemblance to a portion of the name of Hagar's well, but *Mohéïleh* (or as it is sometimes spelt *Muweïleh*), which has no resemblance to it at all. The only other proofs Mr Rowlands offers in confirmation of this supposed discovery are, that the Arabs took him to a small cavern in the chalky hills hard by, which they called Béit Hagar—'the house of Hagar;' and the vicinity of the place to the Desert between it and Nukhl, which he considers the wilderness of Paran, making it extend as

far west as Ghebel Yalack on the very borders of Egypt. It is probable that Lahai-roi was somewhere in this region; but the word *Beer*, applied to it in Scripture, as distinguished from *Áin*, a fountain, indicates in the Hebrew, as in the Arabic, a well artificially made, and therefore cannot be identified with this natural cavity in the rocky bed of a winter stream. Here both men and camels drank their fill, and afterwards filled the water-skins and one of the barrels. The latter operation was an amusing one. To save the trouble of unloading, the camel was made to lie down, and all the kitchen utensils capable of carrying water were put in requisition to fill the barrel slung to its side. At the mouth of the Wadi Sémah, which runs eastward, we met and saluted a Bedouin, riding at a rapid pace on a dromedary. I was informed that he belonged to the tribe of the Howatát, whose territories are in the neighbourhood of Mount Seir, but who come occasionally into the region of the Tiáhah when the pasturage in their own district has been consumed.

At 1.15 we arrived at Khandól, where there is an extensive Arab burying-ground. Several of the graves were decked with branches of the *retem*; and among them is the burying-place of one of their saints, though in no way distinguished from those around it. Our escort hurried off to it, fell on their knees, rubbed some dust upon their heads, muttered a prayer, and rejoined us in little more than two minutes. My own camel driver, Aécéd, brought some dust in his hand, and rubbed it on the camel's head. On asking if the camel was expected to mourn for the dead as well as the men, he told me it was a charm to prevent any evil from coming to the animal, and he was sure of its success. From the bank of the wadi we had now to descend into the dry bed of the torrent, where our course was both tortuous and rough; but a new feature presented itself in a considerable depth of good soil on the banks, which had been much cut up by the stream. While scrambling among the bushes, we started two beautiful birds not much larger than partridges, but resembling in colour silver pheasants, which our men called *Khadgel*.

At 12.20, having left Wadi Mohéileh, where it takes an easterly direction, we crossed the small Wadi Maramr, in the bottom of which I observed excellent soil from six to eight feet deep, no doubt an alluvial deposit, but still a proof that the character of the country was changing for the better as we advanced northwards. The Arabs had sown a considerable quantity of corn on it. Attempts had been made recently to dig a well on the bank of this wadi, but, probably from want of proper instruments, the work had been abandoned before

water was reached. A low range of hills named Ghebel Reesehe bounds it on the right side ; and a few miles behind them, to the north, rises a higher range called Ghebel Furet el Amr. At 2.15 we entered Wadi Sábhah, a large portion of which was green with waving corn, on which a couple of camels were making a dainty repast—an example ours could with difficulty be restrained from following. They roared and groaned their displeasure as long as the luckier depredators were in sight. The Wadi Uábseh was crossed at 3.20 ; and the mist, which had hung heavily on the higher mountains to the right all day, now partially cleared off, enabling me to have a good view of them. A little to the S. of E. there was a range of considerable height, which the Arabs called Ghebel Wadi Ain, from a wadi of that name which runs at its base, and discharges its waters into Wadi Sábhah. To the east rose another chalky rugged mountain called Ghebel Sábhah ; and to the north of it, but still to our right, Ras es Serám, near the mouth of Wadi es Serám, which we entered at 4.20, after an hour's ride over gently rising ground covered with a quantity of rough herbage.

At this point the road from Akabah, after passing through Wadi el Ain, joins the central road from the Convent and Suez to Hebron, along which we were now travelling. Immediately on entering this valley, my attention was drawn to lines of stones embedded in the ground, running entirely across it, sometimes consisting of a single row, sometimes of two or three, rising above one another like steps of a stair—evidently the work of men, but as certainly not of those who now dwell in the Desert. I asked if there were ruins in the neighbourhood, but was answered in the negative. What name, then, did they give to these rows of stones ? Menhazen said they were called *el Agúm*, but more than this I could not get. I resolved to use my eyes diligently as we proceeded, in the hope of finding out some clue to them ; but in the meantime set them down as fences made by men who once inhabited this valley to divide their fields, or more probably as barriers to prevent the soil from being washed away. I was not at the time aware how near we were to the ruins I had so often heard spoken of under the name of *el Aujeh*, otherwise these would probably not have excited so much curiosity. After meeting with a number of similar ones, the opinion I had formed on first seeing them was fully confirmed. After advancing about a mile up Wadi es Serám, we halted for the night. We had seen more verdure during the course of this one day than we had met with in all our previous journey. The region is capable of great fertility ; it only wants another Isaac

with his herdsmen to dig wells. The Arabs are too lazy for that ; otherwise they might raise excellent crops.

*February 14.*—We resumed our journey at nine o'clock. A cold sharp wind was blowing, but the mist had entirely cleared away. An hour brought us to the end of the wadi, where it falls into Wadi Birain, which comes from the SE., and runs in a northerly direction. As its name denotes, this wadi possesses a fountain, not more than an hour distant ; and, considering its position relatively to Gerúr and Bir es Saba, it seems a more likely place to look for Lahai-roi than the Wadi Mohéileh. Near the junction of Wadi Serám with Wadi Birain we fell in with many walls in the former, some of them being much higher than those we had seen at its entrance, and all of them running up towards two *tells* of variegated red sandstone, the summits of which were covered with ruins. From one of these I brought away a stone having some carving on it ; and I observed, on two or three of those lying beside it, rude figures resembling those seen in Wadi Mokatteb, but none of the characters which there accompany them. Perhaps on these rocks there may have stood a watch-tower or fortress, for the protection of the pass in former days. We proceeded for a short distance along the Wadi Birain, passing some fine long grass, in the midst of which large quantities of beautiful crimson anemonies were growing ; and then, leaving the káfileh to pursue their way to Reháibeh by this wadi, I turned off to the north, with Menhazen, Aéed, and Shaheen, to visit the ruins of el Aujeh.

A few minutes brought us into the midst of ruined walls of great extent, and running in all directions across the plain. A small wadi called Azez runs towards the north ; and, as we rode along the bank, we perceived on either side the ruins of edifices, and dams built across the watercourse ; while the walls over which we were scrambling, sometimes eight feet in thickness, seemed, from the size of the enclosures, to have once surrounded gardens. Before us, on a *ras* or projecting hill, there were ruins of a more imposing kind, one of which looked like a castle or acropolis, as indeed on a nearer approach we found it to be. These ruins are about a mile separate from one another ; and the former bear distinct evidences of being much more ancient than the latter. Aéed, and one of the Azázimeh tribe of Bedouins who was feeding his flock close by, gave the name of El Abdeh to those we passed first, and that of El Aujeh to those on the hill ; but the latter is the name by which they are both generally known among the Bedouins. From the name of El Abdeh being thus occasionally given to them, Dr Robinson—who was the first in modern

times to call attention to these ruins—supposes that they mark the site of Eboda, one of the Roman stations between Gaza and Ailah, mentioned in the Peutinger Tables; and their size seems to give some probability to the conjecture, as Eboda was an episcopal city, and a place of some importance. Still the identification is not quite so certain as he imagines it; for round the camp-fire, in the evening, Menhazen volunteered the information that there was a ruined city, El Abdeh, at two days' distance, to the ESE. of Reháibeh, on the way to Petra; and I have since seen it marked in Ritter's map exactly in that direction. It is certainly more probable that the Roman road should have followed such a course, than made a circuit by El Aujeh and Wadi Lassán. Menhazen's account of this El Abdeh was, that the houses were still standing and fit to live in. It is to be hoped some future traveller will ascertain whether his account is really correct.

At 10.40 we passed the mouth of Wadi Um Mutzis, a narrow defile running into Wadi Azez. As we approached the promontory we found two pools, each containing a much larger quantity of water than that of Mohéileh; and on the bank by their side a group of five very aged nubk trees, the solitary tokens of former life and cultivation, where all around is now shapeless ruin and desolation. Dismounting here, a quarter of an hour's walk brought us to the foot of the hill, the southern side of which is covered with hewn stones, broken pottery, and limestone pillars, which have been rolled down the hill. It was impossible to make out the shape of the houses, they were so choked up with the stones which once had formed their walls. These had been prepared with great care, and seemed to have been fitted together without mortar. One or two cisterns, and the foundations of one of the city gates, were all that could be distinguished. In toiling up the hill, I found several pieces of ancient glass, having the same appearance as those which have been discovered in Pompeii, and in the tombs of Etruria.

The hill consists of two cones. On that to the west was a large building formed of hewn stones, the walls of which are still standing to the height of thirty feet. On entering it through a small hole, we found it had been used as a Christian church. It was not built in the form of a cross, but consisted of a nave and side aisles, all of equal length. At the southern end of the nave, opposite the great door, probably where the altar stood, there were three alcoves in the wall, and a corresponding one in each of the aisles. The western aisle has been separated from the church by a wall having a door of communi-

cation; and probably the eastern was once divided from it in a similar manner, but it was in such a state of dilapidation that it was impossible to ascertain the fact. There was a portico in front of the great door. I stepped the area of the church, and found its length to be 60 feet by 46 in breadth; the porch was 24 feet in length, and of the same breadth with the church. The western aisle was eighteen feet in breadth. There were lying about many circular limestone blocks about three feet in height, which had evidently been placed one upon another, so as to form pillars; but there was not one pillar standing erect, and I failed to discover any capitals.

From this we proceeded to the eastern cone on which the castle stood. It consists of a large enclosure in the shape of a parallelogram. The walls are generally from ten to thirty feet high, but that on the eastern side is fully fifty feet; and the charred ends of the beams which supported three stories still stick fast in its recesses. Creeping through a hole in this wall, we found that other buildings connected with it had been continued to the very edge of the hill. Among them were two wells or rather cisterns, one about twenty, and the other sixty or seventy feet deep, into which the water from the roofs of the buildings had been conducted by *terra cotta* pipes, exactly as at this day in Italian cities. The deeper well had been excavated for nearly thirty feet in the solid rock, and this part was circular, but the upper part was square, carefully built with hewn stones; and at the distance of five feet from one another, projecting stones had been left at the angles, to afford the means of descent for cleaning and repairing it. On descending the eastern face of the hill, and crossing the Wadi Azéz again, we came upon another deep well which had formerly been worked by a Sakíéh or water-wheel; and close beside it were the ruins of another church, built on the same plan as the one on the hill; a portion of the alcove in this instance, at the eastern end, being all that is left standing. May not the more ancient ruins to the SE. mark the site of Abimelech's regal city?

We again mounted, and resumed our course to the NE. over a broad plain called Wadi Háfir, which stretches away to the north. On the south and east a magnificent chain of rugged hills was visible about a day's journey distant. Several of the Azazimeh were grazing their flocks in this wadi, and came to salute our Sheikh as we passed. Their territory extends from El Aujeh to Dhaharíyeh; and as they bear the character of expert thieves, Menhazen expressed his determination to keep a strict watch for the next two nights while we should be among them. If one might judge from the number of camels

grazing in this and the neighbouring wadis, they are far from being a poor tribe. After leaving Wadi Aberouseh about one o'clock, we got among sand hills, where the camels laboured exceedingly, and began to complain bitterly by roaring of their hard fate. While passing over the fine loose sand (the first almost we have seen in any considerable quantity since leaving the Pyramids), my attention was attracted by the tracks of some animal, triangular in shape, and occurring in two lines close to one another. No one could tell what they were; and while concluding that they must have been left by some small bird hopping along the sand, the matter was settled by seeing a monster scarabeus plodding his solemn way, and leaving these singular marks behind him.

At 1.45 we got rid of the sand, and entered Wadi Elekhát Gehuret. To the NE. before us we had a range of low hills called Ghebel Remish Shemra, and another, still farther off in the same direction and higher, called Ghebel Fúret Wadi Labir; while Ghebel Haiaigah bounded the wadi to the east. From this we passed into Wadi Abyad, which resembles in shape a large basin. It is well filled with shrubs, and near the middle of it is a cairn of stones covering the tomb of Sheikh Amri. The history of this Sheikh I could not learn; but there is a curious superstition attaching to his grave. As we approached, the Arabs began to shout angrily, as if they were scolding some one. When I asked what this meant, they said they were scolding and abusing the Sheikh. Some threw stones at it, and others ran to the tomb and committed indecencies upon it. The reason of all this is, that Sheikh Amri is an evil genius, and if those who pass his tomb do not abuse and insult him, he is sure to send them some mishap before they reach the end of their journey; but if they bully him sturdily, he will lie still, and nothing will happen to them. I can answer for it, he got sufficient ill treatment from my people to have raised a ghost instead of laying one. Shaheen told them that if they had dared to treat a Sheikh's tomb in Egypt as they had done Amri's, they would be taken without ceremony and burned alive.

Passing through another short belt of sand hills, at three o'clock we entered Wadi Enháh running NE., and pursued it till it fell into Wadi Reháibeh. The shrubs which had been our companions in the Desert became now much less frequent, but at intervals there were instead patches of natural grass. We fell in with more encampments of the Azázimeh here, and their camels, sheep, and goats were grazing on every side. Menhazen pointed out to me from a rising ground at the end of the wadi, far away to the north-east, Ghebel Khalíl in the

vicinity of Hebron; from which, however, we were still distant two days' journey. At the same time we had on our right another range of high precipitous mountains called Ghebel el Magrah, which stretches away to the north to the very borders of Palestine. At 4.15 we entered Wadi Reháibeh, and immediately perceived signs of ancient cultivation in the foundation walls, which separated fields and kept the earth from being swept away. There was a good deal of corn sown in this valley, which promised an excellent crop. After running about a mile in a north-easterly direction it makes a sudden turn to the east, and becomes very narrow; and here we found the Bir Reháibeh, and near it a ruined town of the same name, beside which we encamped for the night.

This well, I doubt not, is the same which Jacob dug when he was driven away from the valley of Gerar by the herdsmen of Abimelech. The similarity of name, taken in connection with its position midway between Gerúr and Bir es Saba, can leave little room for hesitation. The well has been completely filled up, probably during some hostile feud between rival tribes, just as the wells of Abraham were by the subjects of Abimelech. It is of circular shape, twelve feet in circumference, and has been regularly built, one course of stones being still visible above the ground. By its side stands a small dilapidated building, which was originally a Christian place of worship, and afterwards a mosque; but it is no longer in use for worship of any kind. No discovery has yet been made amongst ancient writers or travellers of the name of the ruined town beside it. With its overthrow, its more modern name was probably forgotten, and the Arabs have resumed, as they usually do, the more ancient name of Reháibeh. As it is on the direct line between Eleusa and the ruins of El Aujeh, the fact that no mention is made of it in the Peutinger Tables, or elsewhere, rather confirms the impression that El Aujeh is not the Eboda mentioned in them, and that the Roman road to Ailah ran more to the eastward.

On a limestone hill to the north of the well are the ruins of the town, which has been as completely prostrated as El Aujeh. To examine this carefully was my occupation while the tents were being set up, and the evening meal prepared. Its circumference I should estimate at about half a mile or a little more. Portions of the narrow paved streets were visible here and there, and the paved courts of many of the houses, but not a single building stood entire. A few courses of hewn stone, fresh as if finished only a year ago, and carefully fitted together without mortar, are all that remain in their original position; for the rest there is no description so terse or



truthful as that of the prophet—"He shall stretch out upon it *the line of confusion, and the stones of emptiness.*"—Isaiah xxxiv. 11. The only things in this place which had escaped the ruthless hand of the destroyer were the cisterns, one or more apparently having belonged to every house. They are excavated in the rock to the depth of about twenty feet, are perfectly entire, and have each a double aperture at the top, the lower one being round and the upper a square, into which one of the stones of the pavement fitted exactly. A building somewhat stronger in its outer walls, on the top of the hill, may probably have been a fortress or castle. At the foot of the hill a large artificial pool for water, like those with which one becomes so familiar in Palestine, still stands entire, but no longer contains water. It is twelve feet deep, of an irregular semi-circular form, constructed by cutting out the rock behind and building an artificial embankment in front. A stair in one of the angles, broken but still practicable, leads down into it; but the bottom, when I saw it, was covered with a most luxuriant crop of marsh mallow. On the other side of the wadi, and a little to the east of the well, are the remains of a large Christian church in as ruinous a condition as the rest of the town.

I had no sooner set out to make an inspection of this fallen town than Menhazen joined me, and dogged my steps with a pertinacity, which, in my simplicity, I referred to anxiety lest I should fall into the hands of the Azázimeh; but when sitting round the fire at night, the true cause of all this attention came out. He told Shaheen that the ancestors of the Franks once inhabited this land; that great treasures were buried by them, in search of which we came; that we have the places all marked in our books, and when we come to the locality we tear a leaf out of the book and burn it, and the wind blows it at once to the spot. He was determined I should not carry off the treasure without his sharing a part of it, and hence his jealous guardianship. I laughed heartily at this recital, and told Shaheen to inform him that it was to trace the march of Beni Israel that the Franks came to this Desert; that they spent a great deal of money in doing so, by which the Bedouins were getting rich, but that no one as yet had ever got treasure by travelling in it. We had a visit from some of the Azázimeh during the evening; and while the pipe was passing round the circle, Menhazen took the opportunity of dropping a hint that he would be prepared for them in case they attempted any thievish tricks, by telling the dragoman in their hearing to go to his master and ask some powder, that they might load their guns. The powder was

given, the guns loaded in the presence of those who were to get the benefit of the charge in case of an assault, and it is scarcely necessary to add that the warning was taken, for they have the impression that English powder never hangs fire. This evening, for the first time, the tents were pitched on the grassy sward; but the damp arising from it was so great, that I should have much preferred the dry gravelly pavement to which we had been so long accustomed. The bittern and owl kept up a melancholy concert during the night.

*February 15.*—The grass around the tents was covered with hoar frost when we rose, and the water in the zimzimieh frozen. We set off at 8.50, and followed the Wadi Reháibeh, which, after bending for twenty minutes to the east, assumes its former north-easterly direction. A large portion of the bottom of the wadi was waving with green corn. At the end of it we passed a spot where the Azázimeh had very lately been encamped. The carcasses of a camel, a horse, and a donkey, were lying in our path, on which an army of vultures were making a dainty morning meal. Our Sheikh determined to have a shot at them; but a Bedoui firelock is an unwieldy thing; before the flint was got out, and a match lit, the revellers had all taken flight but one. At a fight in the open field there is no danger to be apprehended from these matchlocks, because they are so heavy that the Bedouins cannot fire them from the shoulder, but must get behind a stone to have a rest for the instrument before they can take aim. Our friend could find no friendly rock at hand; so running to the foot of a craggy hill, on which the vultures had alighted at a respectable distance, he crouched behind a stone, fired, and missed, for which he was well laughed at by the whole kafiléh. The strength and accuracy of his vision, however, were extraordinary. The ball hit somewhere high up among the rocks; but he was determined not to lose his lead as well as his powder, and having marked the spot where it fell, he clambered up the steep side of the hill and recovered it. I was disappointed that he had not shot one of these birds, as I should have liked to take its exact dimensions. Judging from the size of their wings as they rose, I should think they could not have measured much less than eight feet from tip to tip of the wings. It is a well known fact that they can descry a dying camel at an immense distance, and that within a quarter of an hour of its being abandoned, a score or two will collect round the poor expiring animal, and commence the work of dissection. I was afterwards indebted to my friend Dr Sim at Jerusalem, for the information, that on dissection of the eye of one of these vultures, he dis-

covered a set of nerves connected with it, which serve the place of a telescope, and enable the animal to discover objects at an immense distance.

From Wadi Reháibeh we passed over an undulating plain covered with grass and many shrubs, for which the Arabs knew no name. Mr Rowlands mentions having seen, at a quarter of an hour's distance to the north of Reháibeh, an ancient site called Sebáta, which he thinks must be the Zephath of Scripture. Although I looked diligently, all efforts to discover it were vain; but on asking the Bedouins, they told me that directly east from Khalasah there are ruins called Kherbet Sebáta at the foot of the Magrah mountains, which were in sight, and this most probably is the Zephath of Judges i. 17 (also called Hormah), which formed one of the frontier towns of the tribe of Simeon to the south.

At 11.30 we descended into Wadi Khálasah, which runs from SE. to NW., and on the opposite bank of which were the ruins of a large town called Khálasah, the ancient Eleusa, another station on the Roman road across the Desert; it is probably also the still more ancient Chesil, one of the towns on the southern border of Judah, which is mentioned by Joshua in connection with Hormah and Ziklag. —Joshua xv. 30, 31. If the barometrical observations made by Russegger are correct, it would appear that Khálasah stands 371 Paris feet lower than Reháibeh, though we appeared to be gradually ascending most of the way. It was once an episcopal city belonging to *Palestina tertia*, but the majority of its inhabitants were Pagans. Some curious notices concerning it are given by Reland;<sup>1</sup> but the most interesting account of it is that by Dr Robinson, to whom belongs the honour of having brought Eleusa again to light, after having been buried in oblivion for more than eleven centuries.<sup>2</sup> The city stood upon an island formed by two wadis, which separate a little above the ancient town, and unite again about a quarter of a mile below it.

Immediately after emerging from Wadi Khálasah, we came to a deep circular well, the bottom of which was filled with mud, and had only a few inches of water in it at the time we passed; but it is still used by the Arabs. Around the mouth were stone troughs of ancient workmanship, at which, as in former days, the flocks are watered. The city is one mass of ruins, the overthrow being even more complete than in those we had left. I saw only one bit of wall standing, about ten feet

<sup>1</sup> *Palestina*, p. 755.

<sup>2</sup> *Biblical Researches*, vol. i. p. 296, et seq.

high. There are two square ruins near each other, about the centre of the city, which stand isolated from all the rest, and probably are the remains of towers. The compact mass of the city has occupied nearly the whole of the middle of the island; but straggling ruins show that its greatest extension was in the same direction as that of the island, namely, from south-east to north-west. Unlike Reháibeh and El Anjeh, much of the stone has been removed from these ruins, and marks of recent digging and quarrying among them led to the explanation that the inhabitants of Gaza—which is only one day's journey hence—send camels and carry away the stones wholesale for building purposes, as this costs less trouble than quarrying them in the neighbourhood. Many of the Azázimeh were feeding their flocks around the ruins, and in the centre of them they have formed a large burying-ground.

At 12.15 we entered a wadi called Rumalet Hamed, and gradually ascended its course; and at 1.15 passed from it into Wadi Khasáli, in which there were to our right twenty tents of the Tiáhah, belonging to a different section of the tribe from that of which our escort were a part. Many of the men came to meet us and salute their friends. At 2.10 we crossed the dry bed of a torrent, to which the men gave the name of El Murtábeh, and shortly afterwards entered Wadi Um Mouchroum, a narrow valley between two ranges of chalk hills, at the top of which we reached the most elevated ground on our route, and began gradually to descend to the north. Here we saw, for the first time, though still at a considerable distance, the low botryoidal hills of the land of Judah; a refreshing sight, as indicating our near approach to the borders of the promised land, but in itself disappointing from their tameness after the rugged, savage mountain scenery to which the eye had been so long accustomed in the Desert. Here also we fell in with the Sheikh who had conducted the two English gentlemen that had kept ahead of me, to Hebron. He told us that they had arrived on Monday night, and he had left them in quarantine. There were a number of Handal plants in this quarter, on some of which I counted as many as fifteen and twenty apples, in all stages of maturity.

Descending a wadi corresponding to that we had mounted on the other side of the hill, we came upon the ruins of a small town or village of ancient date, which an Arab shepherd close by called Kharbet el Ruahéi, at the mouth of Wadi er Ghebel. Farther down the valley some Tiáhah Arabs began to shout loudly to our men as we came in sight, while a number of other Bedouins came rushing furiously down

the hill across our path. For a moment it was feared that the latter were the Azázimeh coming to intercept us for the purpose of plunder; but it soon turned out that the alarm was caused by a camel having fallen over a precipice into the torrent-bed, and by those in charge of it, who were unable to extricate it, shouting for assistance. An immense broad plain now lay stretched out at some miles distance below us, rising gradually on the opposite side towards the low hills of Judah. Its vegetation was of a dark, tawny colour, similar to what we had witnessed all day; but right before us were two spots of intense green, sure evidence that there was water close at hand. The name made my heart beat quick; it was the Wadi Bir es Saba. These green spots marked 'the well of the oath' where Abraham and Abimelech made a covenant of friendship. It was the site of Beer-sheba, one of the southernmost cities of the tribe of Judah, and, along with Dan, one of the proverbial boundaries of the land of Israel, as the Land's End and John o' Groat's are at this day of our own.

Before bidding farewell to the Desert, it is proper to state the reasons which have led me to conclude that Wadi Gerúr is the GERAR of Scripture. I have deferred doing so until now, because it was necessary that the reader should have some idea of the country lying between it and Beersheba in order fully to understand the subject. Gerar has been generally supposed to be situated somewhere in the neighbourhood of Gaza, for no other reason that I can discover than that we are told 'Isaac went unto Abimelech, king of the Philistines, unto Gerar.'—Genesis xxvi. 1. If from this title we are to infer that Abimelech was the ruler over all Philistia in the days of the Patriarchs, it is certain that a change of government had taken place ere we come to know much of that people in the time of the Judges and Samuel, for then the government of the country seems to have been republican rather than monarchical, assuming the appearance of a confederation of petty states, the southernmost of which was Gaza; and it is not improbable, if such a change took place, that the territory of republican Philistia was much smaller than what belonged to the kingdom in the days of the Patriarchs. There are no data to aid us in fixing the southern boundary of the land of Philistia in those early days; and therefore Abimelech might still be king of the Philistines, even though we seek for his capital in the neighbourhood of Wadi Gerúr. Such large kingdoms, however, as the entire land of the Philistines would make, were rarely to be met with in those days, and it is much more probable that all that is intended by the title king of the

Philistines is, that he was the ruler or Sheikh of one of the tribes who were known by that general name.

Whatever opinion may be entertained on this point, however, it is only in consequence of some vague tradition that Gerar is now sought for so far north as the southern part of what is usually known as the Bible Philistia. Lieutenant Van de Velde went in search of it the year before my visit to Palestine, and his testimony is: 'It is true the Sheikh told me that Gerar was unknown to him. Gerar has ceased to exist for many long years, and its site has been forgotten.' He heard, indeed, at Gaza that there was a place three hours distant called Um el Gerar; but he says of it: 'There are no ruins on the spot; old wells, too, there are none.'<sup>1</sup> 'Of Gerar, or a name answering to it,' says Dr Robinson, 'some of the Christians of Gaza thought they had heard in the south; but the people of the country knew nothing of it.'<sup>2</sup> On a *prima facie* view of the matter, Wadi Gerúr, which is known to every Arab of the Desert, and marked in most of the maps, is to be preferred as the site of Gerar to a place unknown to the people of the country, and marked on the maps according to the fancy of their constructors, and with a point of interrogation.

The next evidence to be produced in its favour is that of Eusebius and Jerome. They place Gerar 25 miles to the south of Eleutheropolis, beyond<sup>3</sup> the Daroma.<sup>4</sup> Eleutheropolis was a Roman city in the south of Judah, the position of which has not yet been satisfactorily identified; but Jerome informs us that the Daroma (or Darúm, as it was called in Hebrew) was a tract of country to the south of Judah, which began seven miles below Eleutheropolis and extended southward seventeen miles, beyond which lay the country of Gerar.<sup>5</sup> In his commentary on Genesis, Jerome further states that the country of Gerar is three days' journey from Mount Moriah, which would place it in the Desert as far south as El Anjeh at least; and Reland, to whom I am indebted for the quotation, adds that, in the Arabic version of the Pentateuch, the name *Khalúz* is substituted for Gerar,<sup>6</sup> which evidently is intended for Eleusa. Bonfrerius, in his annotations on the Onomasticon, asserts in plain terms that Gerar was in the Desert.<sup>7</sup> If in the

<sup>1</sup> Journey in Syria and Palestine, vol. ii., p. 138, 182.

<sup>2</sup> Biblical Researches, vol. ii., p. 383. <sup>3</sup>  $\nu \pi \epsilon \epsilon \sigma$ , Euseb. *Trans.* Hieron.

<sup>4</sup> Eusebii Onomasticon curâ Bonfrerii, sub Voce Gerarâ.

<sup>5</sup> Relandi Palestina, pp. 185-187. <sup>6</sup> Idem, pp. 804-805.

<sup>7</sup> As this note of Bonfrerius is valuable it is here inserted entire. 'In Geraris peregrinati sunt Abraham et Isaac diversis temporibus (Gen. xx. xxvi.) eam Philisthæi tenuerunt præcis illis Patriarcharum temporibus in qua et regulum

Desert, we surely cannot err in including within the country, the very spot which still bears the name; nor perhaps in looking for its capital in the more ancient set of ruins at El Anjeh.

But what appears the strongest proof in favour of Wadi Gerúr, is the description given in Scripture of the situation of the country of Gerar. In Genesis xx. 1, we are told that Abraham journeyed from Hebron 'toward the south country, and dwelt between Kadesh and Shur; and sojourned in Gerar.' If Gerar lay to the north of Beersheba, as is generally supposed, a glance at the map will show that the journey from Hebron thither must have been directly *west* instead of south. Gerar therefore must be sought for in the direction at least of Wadi Gerúr. The sacred narrative gives us two landmarks, Kadesh and Shur, the position of which are sufficiently well known to enable us to form a pretty accurate idea of a country, or even a city, lying between them. Kadesh was a city on the uttermost border of Edom<sup>1</sup> (Numbers xx. 16); that determines its direction. It was also a wilderness, for we are told, 'They came unto the wilder-

habuerunt; at posterioribus temporibus nunquam Gerara inter Philisthæorum Satrapias recensetur, ut proinde eam urbem et regionem Philisthæi amississe videantur. Sed neque Israelitæ eam urbem aut regionem unquam tenuisse videntur; siquidem neque ea Terræ Promissæ terminis legitur usquam comprehensa; neque cum eam, sub rege Asa expugnarunt et percusserunt (2 Paral. xiv. 13, 14) sibi eam videntur Israelitæ retinuisse. Porrò, eo tempore quo eam Asa rex percussit, videtur fuisse sub imperio Zaræ regis Æthiopum. Hinc intelligas cur hic Hieronymus dicat eam fuisse *trans* Daroma, quod idem est ac dicere fuisse trans Australem plagam, ad quam extendebatur Israelitarum regio. Adde quod situs ille inter Cades et Sur qui exprimitur Gen. xx. 1 satis indicet Geraram fuisse *in Deserto*, cum tam Cades, seu Cadesbarne, quam Sur in deserto essent.'

<sup>1</sup> On glancing hurriedly over Mr Stanley's work, I find he has broached a theory regarding Kadesh, for which—though very ingenious—there does not seem sufficient warrant in the Scripture narrative. It is, that Petra, which, for aught we know to the contrary, was the metropolis of Edom in the days of the Israelites, as Josephus tells us it was in his (Joseph. Antiq. Jud., Lib. IV., cap. 4), is identical with Kadesh Barnea. The reasons assigned are, that the cleft through which it is now approached is called Wadi Mousa; and that the Hebrew word used to denote the rock which Moses struck is *Sela*, 'a cliff,' while the early name of Petra was also Selah. The name of Moses, however, is so frequently applied to localities in the Desert, that no argument can be drawn from that circumstance alone; and surely, in that region of cliffs and precipices, the fact that the name Selah is given to the rock that Moses struck, as well as to an Idumean city, is not sufficient to identify the two; especially as the former bore in addition the name of Meribah. The Hebrew text does not lend any support to the conclusion drawn by some from our English translation, that Kadesh was *within* the border of Edom; as Petra beyond all controversy was.

ness of Paran to Kadesh.'—Numbers xiii. 26. 'They pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.'—Numbers xxxiii. 36. 'The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.'—Psalm xxix. 8. How far the wilderness of Paran or Kadesh extended westward, is yet undecided; but the eastern border was the Wadi el Arabah, 'the Plain of Paran' (Genesis xiv. 6, 7), in Abraham's time; and 'the Valley of Salt' in the days of King Amaziah.—2 Kings xiv. 7. Shur was that portion of the Desert which bordered on the land of Egypt (Exodus xv. 22), and received its name from a mountain range in its neighbourhood, which still bears to this day the name of Ghebel Sur. Mr Rowlands affirms that he passed it on his way to Suez, and says, 'Shur—Jebel es Sür, which is its present name—is a grand chain of mountains running north and south, a little east of the longitude of Suez; lying as Shur did before Egypt.'<sup>1</sup>

Supposing Gerar then to be where hitherto it has been always sought for, to the north and west of Beersheba, a line drawn through it, from any point in the Wadi Arabah between Mount Hor and Ain Weibah, so far from falling between Suez and Pelusium, would touch the Mediterranean somewhere above Askalon. Or if drawn from

And the enmity which led Edom to refuse Israel a passage along the highways of their territory, though they promised to move on 'without trespass, or injury, or unrequited favour,' makes it very certain, that had Kadesh been identical with Petra, Israel could neither have entered it, nor held it, except at the point of the sword, whereas we know that God forbade Israel to make war on Edom because he was his brother. It is well known that Petra, in the course of its history, has borne the names of Hagar, Arce, Petra, and Selah; but Mr Stanley proposes to add Kadesh Barnea also as its earliest designation, and one which had been already forgotten ere Selah appears in Scripture history.—2 Kings xiv. 7. But Kadesh Barnea had a good many *aliases* as well as Petra; and, before adopting his theory, it will be necessary to ascertain that these all tally with 'the City of the Rock.' It is called Kadesh of Zin, and Kadesh of Paran, both of which mean Kadesh of the *Desert*; but Mr Stanley's own words regarding Petra are—'The first thing that struck me *in turning out of the Arabah, up the defiles that lead to Petra, was, that we had suddenly left the Desert.*'—*Stanley's Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 88, 95, 96. It is called En Mishpat, 'the Well of Judgment,' in the account of Chedorlaomer's wars, and is very pointedly described as lying to the north of Mount Seir, and the habitation of the Horites, which Petra most probably then was (Genesis xiv. 6, 7); while the passages in which it is described as Meribah Kadesh (Numbers xxvii. 14, compared with Numbers xx. 13, 22), also clearly indicate that it was at a distance from Mount Hor. It is not necessary to insist on the inconsistency of making Kadesh Barnea, which was one of the cities of Israel, inherit the doom of Edom, as must be the case were it identified with Petra; for enough, I think, has been said to prove the theory untenable.

<sup>1</sup> Williams' Holy City, Vol. I, p 465.



Shur (which we may place with tolerable accuracy midway between the Mediterranean and Red Seas) through the *supposed* Gerar, it would fall above the head of the Dead Sea, near Jericho, instead of far below its southernmost border. It appears unnecessary to add another word to induce every man, who entertains any respect for Bible geography, to abandon henceforward the search for Gerar in the neighbourhood of Gaza. On the other hand, if a line be drawn from Ain el Weibah (acknowledged, since Dr Robinson's visit, by most travellers to be the probable site of Kadesh Barnea) to Ghebel es Súr, it will be found to run as nearly as possible through Wadi Gerúr; and it is therefore with a tolerable degree of confidence that I have arrived at the conclusion, that Wadi Gerúr is a portion of the ancient Gerar.

The latest notice which we have of Gerar in Scripture, perfectly agrees with the situation thus assigned it. In the time of Asa, King of Judah, nearly 1000 years B.C., it seems to have been in possession of an Ethiopian prince called Zerah, who made war with Judah. The hostile armies met in the valley of Zephathah in Mare-shah, which may possibly have been the Sebáta described by Menhazen as lying at the foot of Ghebel Magrah, due east from Khálasah; and which was also one of the frontier towns of Israel, belonging to the tribe of Simeon. From thence Asa pursued the defeated Ethiopians to Gerar, and 'smote all the cities round about Gerar.'<sup>1</sup> 2 Chron. xiv. 9-14.

It appears from the history of Abraham, as given in Genesis, that he was in the country of Gerar when Isaac was born, and when Hagar and her son Ishmael were dismissed from his tent; in which case the direction taken by them, going towards the wilderness of Beersheba, would be north instead of south, as has generally been supposed.—Gen. xx. xxi. The record of Isaac's sojourn in the country

<sup>1</sup> If we are at liberty to suppose that the harder sound of the Hebrew *resh* was changed for the softer one of *shin*, we shall find the Gerar of the patriarchs reproduced in the Geshur of later times, for all the notices of Geshur and its inhabitants correspond with the region in which we are shut up to look for Gerar. Joshua associates Geshuri with the borders of the Philistines.—Joshua xiii. 2. David dwelling in Ziklag, somewhere on the borders of the Desert, attacked from thence the Geshurites and Amalekites, whose dwelling was 'as thou goest to Shur, even unto the land of Egypt' (1 Sam. xxvii. 8); but was afraid to let it be known to Achish, king of Gath, with whom they must have had friendly relations. It must be borne in mind, however, that there are two Geshurs: one in the Desert, to the south of the border of Israel; the other beyond Jordan, called Geshur of Aram, or Syria (2 Sam. xv. 8), of which Talmi, Absalom's father-in-law, was king.

of Gerar leads to the same conclusion. After having lived a short time in the town of Gerar, he removed from thence to the *Nahal* or Wadi of Gerar; when driven thence by Abimelech's herdsmen, he dug a well called *Sitnah*, and, on its possession being disputed, he dug another still further north, and called it Rehoboth, which there can be no doubt is identical with the Reháibeh we passed on our journey, from the peculiarity of the expression used to denote its situation: 'He went *up* from thence to Beersheba' (Genesis xxvi. 6, 23); an expression always applied to the northward journey into Palestine, as the phrase 'to go down' was to the southward journey into Egypt. —Genesis xlv. 26, 33, 34.

## CHAPTER VII.

## BEERSHEBA TO JERUSALEM.

WE had probably been travelling for some hours within the boundary of the land of Judah, but now conjecture gave place to certainty. At 4.20 we entered Wadi Bir es Saba, and sending on the camels, I turned to the north to visit the wells. The plain is of great extent, being at least ten miles in length, and varying from one to three miles in breadth. It is narrowest towards the western end, where we crossed it. In descending into it I was struck by the complete change in the aspect of the country since leaving Reháibeh. The dwarf bushes which had there filled the wadis had now almost entirely disappeared, and this plain and the hills around were covered with short grass, not very tempting indeed to the eye of a grazier, but most pleasant to the eye long accustomed to the sand of the Desert. During the rains the body of water that rushes down from the southern hills of Judah must be very great, as the water-course just below the wells is fully fifty feet in width, and is making encroachments annually on the deep rich soil upon its banks. One of the minor streams which runs into it from the north, just above the ruins of the ancient town, has committed great havoc, carrying away immense quantities of earth, and revealing in some places a depth of from six to twelve feet of the finest soil a farmer could desire. These are the *afkim neged*, 'the streams in the south' (literally a rush of waters in the south), Psa. cxxvi. 4, to which the Psalmist likens the liberated hosts returning from Babylon. Many of the streams in the northern and central parts of the land of Israel, though feeble in summer, yet, springing from fountains, are never completely dry. These, on the contrary, are like the wadis in the Desert, the mere ducts through which the surface water is drained off in the rainy seasons; and though no doubt, ere this land was forsaken of its inhabitants, these streams were made to irrigate the land, yet, looking attentively at them on the

spot, the force of the similitude seems to lie in the sudden rise and impetuous flow of the roaring, leaping, joyous waters, as they rushed to the sea, filling to overflow the forsaken channels, bleached with glaring heat during a scorching summer. Similar to this was the sudden rise of hope in the mind of the captives, and the tumultuous joy with which they rushed onward to occupy 'the long desolations.'

On ascending the northern bank of the torrent, we came at once upon the smaller of the two wells. The larger is some yards farther east. Both have been excavated in the solid rock, and carefully built with hewn stone, the upper course of which is nearly sawn through by the friction of the ropes in drawing water. I guessed the diameter of the one to be five, and of the other fourteen feet.<sup>1</sup> There was abundance of water in both, but nothing wherewith to draw it up; and there were no Arabs in the vicinity to whom we could apply for a draft from the wells of Beersheba. There is no rope and pitcher attached to the wells for the benefit of all comers; each clan of the Bedouins has a rope belonging to it, and those who come to draw bring the rope as well as the pitcher. This probably was the case with the woman of Samaria; for when Jesus spoke of giving her living water, she answered; 'Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep; from whence then hast thou that living water?' A great number of ancient water-troughs lie round the mouth of both wells, which are still used for watering flocks. By these very wells, in all probability, Abraham, Isaac, and Abimelech have sat; and no doubt the townsmen of Beersheba would preserve with jealous care the memorials of their venerated forefathers. From this place, with heavy heart but unclouded faith, Abraham set out for Mount Moriah, to offer up his only child at God's command. Beersheba witnessed Rebecca's parting with her favourite son, whom she had driven into exile by her sin, and on whose face she never was to gaze again. In the town which sprang up around these wells, Joel and Abiah, the worthless sons of a worthy sire, were settled as judges, and so incensed the people by their conduct, that they clamoured for a king. From it, too, the prophet who usually never feared the face of man set out for Horeb, the mount of God, probably by the very route we had just travelled, when his faith failed before the threats of Jezebel, and he deemed it hopeless to combat longer single-handed against

<sup>1</sup> Dr Robinson gives the following measurements:—Larger well—diameter,  $12\frac{1}{2}$  feet; depth to water,  $44\frac{1}{2}$  feet; 16 feet cut in the solid rock. Smaller well—diameter, 5 feet; depth, 42 feet.

royal and priestly power. And in Israel's degenerate, God-forgetting days, it would seem that Beersheba sought to out-rival Dan in her idolatry, from the denunciation of Amos, 'They that swear by the sin of Samaria, and say, Thy God, O Dan, liveth; and, The manner of Beersheba liveth; even they shall fall, and never rise up again.'—Amos viii. 14.

The ruins of the border town crown the gentle eminences to the north, which form a sort of semicircle round the wells. They are more extensive than those of Khálasah, extending fully half a mile from E. to W., and nearly a quarter of a mile N. and S., and indicate that the town must have been one of considerable importance, as indeed we are naturally led to expect, from its proximity to Egypt. There are no buildings of any size still standing, and most of the hewn stones which stood above ground have been removed, probably by the inhabitants of Gaza and Hebron, ere they betook themselves for building materials to Khálasah; but large square stones, forming the foundations of ancient buildings, are seen in various places just above the surface. A few steps to the north of the large well, there is a raised pavement fifteen feet in breadth, but only six feet of the length remains entire. A little farther to the NE., there is the fragment of an ancient wall about four feet high, with a portion of the pavement attached; but beyond these there is nothing worth notice.

After spending an hour among the ruins, we mounted again and continued our journey in a north-easterly direction. We had a good view of the mountains of the Desert which we had left, as well as of the hills of Judah before us. Ghebel Magráh was still in sight to the south; the range of Ghebel Rachmah to the south-east; and behind it, but more to the east, another chain called Ras Taréibeh. At 5.40 we passed the ruins of a village a few paces to the left of our path, to which the Arabs gave the name of Shemet Ghemíl; and on the other side of the hill, to the north, they said there was another ruin called Kharbet Um Berút. A little farther on, in the same direction, Mr Van de Velde came upon the ruined fortress of El Lechiyéeh, which he proposes to identify with Bealoth of Joshua xv. 24. He says, 'The peculiar form of this high, strong eminence at the entrance of the hill country of Judea, and its position as the outermost frontier stronghold towards the south, arrested my attention; and a sober examination of Scripture has since led me to the gratifying conviction that El Lechiyéeh can be no other than Bealoth.'<sup>1</sup> Is it not much

<sup>1</sup> Journey in Syria and Palestine, vol. ii. p. 140.

more likely, from this description, taken in connection with the name it still bears, that El Lechiyéh is LACHISH, one of the fortified cities in the south of Judah? This fortress agrees completely in direction, though not exactly in distance, with the account given of Lachish by Eusebius and Jerome, as 'a small town at the seventh milestone going from Eletheropolis towards the Daroma.'<sup>1</sup> Mr Van de Velde was journeying from Beersheba towards Beit Jibrein, which is supposed to be Eletheropolis; and as he does not support his theory about Bealoth by any proof, I think the emendation now suggested is to be preferred.

We halted for the night at six o'clock, in a little hollow on the hill side, and were obliged to dispense with fire as there was no brush-wood to be found. About eleven o'clock, an alarm arose that some of the Azázimeh were coming to rob us; it turned out to be false, but it had the effect of keeping the Tiábah on the *qui vive* during the night. The desire which I had cherished from childhood was now, in the good providence of God, fulfilled. This was my first night in the Holy Land; and as I looked out upon the bright starry heavens from my tent door, in the very region where Abraham had dwelt, it was impossible to forget the gracious promise he received, as he also gazed on them, thousands of years ago, 'Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be.'—Gen. xv. 5.

*February 16.*—As a long journey lay before us ere reaching Hebron, we started at 8.30, and pursued the path we had taken the previous evening, across the hills to the north of Wadi es Saba. Half an hour after starting we came up to some of the Azázimeh, who were ploughing with camels, from whom we learned that the direct path to Dhaharíyeh, which we were following, had been so cut up by the late rains washing away the soil, that it would be impossible for the camels to pass; and we had therefore to descend again into the wadi, and follow its course. As we proceeded, the grass became more luxuriant, interspersed with broad patches of yellow crocuses and red anemonies, which added beautiful variety to as fine a grazing country as could be desired. I no longer wondered that it had been a favourite place of resort with the patriarchs, whose riches consisted in sheep and cattle. There were many camels feeding on the plain, which became much broader as we ascended it. At ten o'clock we crossed the path leading from Gaaz to Petra, and met a company of merchants from the former

<sup>1</sup> Reland's *Palestina*, p. 494.

place bound for the Desert, whose asses were laden with all sorts of commodities likely to prove attractive to the Bedouins. They are great favourites among the tribes of the upper Desert, and travel among them periodically, without fear of being robbed. When they are seen approaching an encampment, there is a rush of the whole population to meet them, and they soon dispose of their wares for payments in kind. Several of the Azázimeh were chaffering with them as we approached; and Menhazen and one of his men set off at a rapid pace to join them. I suppose for the purpose of buying, as one of the donkeys was unloaded, and an hour elapsed before they joined us again.

Right before us was the hill country, the Ghebel el Khalil which we were rapidly approaching. These heights appeared very much more diminutive than when I first caught sight of them from the high ground before reaching Reháibeh. At the southern extremity of the range, the ruins of a town were distinctly visible at 10.45, two or three hours distant, the name of which I was told was Kharbet Khourah. This doubtless was one of the cities of Judah. Can it be the KERIOTH mentioned in Josh. xv. 25? In the same direction, but a little farther east, and distant about twenty miles, I was told there lay the ruins of El Melech, identified by Dr Robinson with the ancient MOLADAH, which adds to the probability that the former is Keriath. Beyond the hills of Khalil, the range of Ghebel Ráchmah was visible, at the foot of which are the ruins of Araárah, the AROER of Judah. A little farther to the south there is a ruin called Kasr es Sir, which Dr Wilson takes for Zior, one of Judah's towns to the south; but which from its name and position should rather be identified with SEIR in the neighbourhood of Hormah and Kadesh Barnea, mentioned in Deut. i. 44, where the Amorites slew the Israelites when they went up to fight contrary to the command of Moses, after the return of the men who had been sent to spy out the land; a Seir totally distinct from that in the land of Edom.<sup>1</sup>

At 11.20 we entered Wadi Khalil, a continuation of the plain of Beersheba, where the advancing hills curtail its width. We crossed a torrent-bed in which there was a little standing water, and immediately afterwards came upon some ruins on the plain, which probably

<sup>1</sup> Mr Rowlands mentions 'the grand plain of es Seir' in this direction, and identifies it with the Seir of Deut. i. 44, and yet overlooking the immediate vicinity of Kadesh-barnea to it according to Scripture narrative, places that locality more than sixty miles to the west, in the vicinity of Ghebel Halál.—*Williams' Holy City*, vol. i., p. 465.

were suburbs of a ruined town of some size on the hill immediately above to the left. Our Arabs called them *Dutrait*, and a shepherd boy whom we met near the place confirmed this nomenclature. On a steep bank on the opposite side of the wadi, there are the foundations of what once has been a large building, probably a fortress, consisting of single blocks of stone of great size, which at a distance looked black as lava. This the shepherd called *er Khelbreh*. Near these ruins a number of nubk trees were growing in the wadi, and many more, apparently dead, were standing on the hill to the north. About half an hour farther on, *Wadi Khalil* makes a turn to the east, and *Menhazen* wished to follow it, though far out of the direct way, in order to save crossing a short but steep ridge that intervened between us and the *Wadi Dhahariyeh*; but as this would have given him an excuse for being out another night, we insisted on his taking the shorter path. We got to the top of the ridge without difficulty in ten minutes; and from thence obtained a most satisfactory view of that portion of Judah's territory which is called in Scripture 'the south,' and 'the hill country.' The hills belong to the cretaceous system, which prevails throughout all the upper Desert. They are of low elevation, of botryoidal form, of nearly the same height, and all separate from one another. They are covered with a scant vegetation, except where the chalk rock crops out, so that the eye alternates between patches of white and green of almost equal size. The scenery is most peculiar, presenting the appearance of a perfect labyrinth of huge tea-cups turned on the edges, with the narrowest openings between them, to represent the wadis. For a quarter of an hour I had as fine a view of them as could be desired; but the north-west wind which had been blowing all morning brought up a mist from the sea, which in a very few minutes shut out the more distant landscape as effectually as if a screen had been dropped between us and it; and during the rest of the journey to *Khalil* the distant hills were seen very indistinctly. This was a great disappointment, as, had it been clear, we should have had a distant view of the mountains of Edom as we advanced. We were now fairly in the hill country of Judea, and had passed into the territory of the tribe of Judah from that of Simeon, through which our journey from Beersheba, across the plain, had been made.

The descent from this ridge was by a very steep path into a narrow secluded wadi, much resembling a Highland glen. The camel which carried the canteen managed to break his girths in descending, and sent his saddle with all attached to it rolling down the hill towards



the torrent-bed below. As the canteen contained the whole stock of eatables and drinkables for the journey, it was of course rather an anxious moment whilst it kept bumping and tumbling over in its descent. Visions of a hotch-potch of wine, macaroni, cheese, mineral waters, biscuits, and fossil shells rose before me when we should regain possession of it. But as I hurriedly ran up the hill again, grave thoughts gave way to uncontrollable laughter at the intense ludicrousness of the scene enacted at the spot where the accident occurred. Most men in the circumstances would have set off full cry after the deserter, leaving explanations till afterwards; but our party preferred taking the explanations first. Shaheen was nearly delirious with rage; at one instant weeping like a child, and the next laying about him with his stick like a madman, all the while spurring out maledictions whenever he found breath enough to swear. The owner of the disburdened camel was coolly calculating the damage done to his saddle gear. Menhazen—a fiery little fellow—was visibly swelling with rage under the volley of Shaheen's insults, and roared away in reply like steam from a safety-valve; while the other men stood by and performed the part of chorus, jinking round the camels with admirable dexterity whenever Shaheen's stick came unpleasantly near them. Poor Hanna alone was scrambling down the hill as nimbly as his long petticoat-garments would allow, after what was his peculiar charge. The canteen was at last brought up by the stump of a tree; and it was found, that owing to good packing, the damage sustained was marvellously small; but much time was lost before the camel was again loaded and the journey resumed.

The wadi in many places was not more than twenty feet wide, bounded on both sides by steep hills. Its course at first was very tortuous, but in the main it runs NE. till it reaches Dhahariyeh, which is an hour and 35 minutes' journey from the place at which the canteen catastrophe occurred. Two things particularly struck me in the course of this ride. The first was, that the ancient land marks still remain just as they were left 1800 years ago. Lines of large stones, artificially laid, run across the hills, marking where the property of one family ceased, and of another began. They bear a strong resemblance to the dykes which divide the fields in Scotland, only they consist of huge single blocks of stone. The other was the evidence of remarkable industry in the early inhabitants of the land, as manifested by the substantial courses of masonry which run at intervals across the wadi, forming regular terraces, and preventing the soil from being washed away as it would otherwise be by the winter rain. It was

affecting to think that the descendants of those whose handiwork has escaped the ravages of time and hostile occupation are now exiles in the land of strangers; but 'God's set time to favour Zion' is approaching, and they will yet reap the benefit of their fathers' industry, for it has been promised them by Him who cannot lie: 'I will settle you after your old estates, and will do better unto you than at your beginnings: and ye shall know that I am the Lord.'—Ezek. xxxvi. 11. Whether it was because I was fresh from the Desert, and this discovery came with all the relish of novelty, or whether that, lying on the borders of the Desert, within reach of Bedouin incursions, this narrow valley has been more neglected than other portions of the land by its present inhabitants, certain it is that these traces of ancient industry and toil made a deeper impression on my mind than any I afterwards met with in the land of Israel. A few of the little fields formed by these terraces were under cultivation; but the far greater number were covered with stones, in such quantities as to suggest the idea that they had been cast there on purpose to prevent cultivation. The hill sides were covered with a small bush having long thorns and a leaf like a miniature fern, called in Arabic *Ballán*, which I had never met with before, but with which the traveller in Palestine and Syria soon becomes abundantly familiar, under the name of *Spinus Christi*; popular tradition culling from it the crown of thorns which pierced the blessed Saviour's brow; which more learned research, without better authority, sometimes assigns to the thorny twigs of the butm tree.

To the right, as we approached Dhahariyeh, the hill side began to be covered with copsewood, in which a grey fox sought cover, after walking most sedately across the wadi a few yards in advance of us. Unaccustomed to be attacked by man, he seemed to feel no fear at our approach, for he turned among the bushes and stood to watch us as we passed. This was too high a degree of impertinence for a Bedouin, with all his value for powder, to stand. Aécéd struck his flint, lit his match, and throwing himself behind a stone took aim, but reynard scented danger in good time, and the shot was as unsuccessful as Menhazen's of the day before. Ten minutes before, we had passed the ruins of a tower or fortress on a cliff projecting into the wadi, called El Buy. At 2.5 we arrived at Dhahariyeh, a village which stands on a hill at the top of the wadi, about 100 yards to the left of the rough bridle path we were pursuing. A village green lay to the south of it, with a pond in one corner, which probably in better days had been a pool, and eight olive trees of venerable antiquity, round which some of the villagers had clustered to watch

us at a distance, and beat a precipitate retreat as we approached. The reason was, that though we had been in the mighty Desert, far from man's abode, and exposed to the free winds of heaven for 36 days, we were now in quarantine lest we should have brought the plague from Egypt in our saddle-bags! The *Guardiani*, or health officers of the Sultan, are stationed here to take charge of every traveller, and conduct him to the Lazaretto at Hebron, without allowing him to turn to the right hand or to the left; and if a villager had come in contact with us he must have accompanied us to our prison, and done penance for his temerity or want of vigilance. There were various remains of antiquity about the place which I was anxious to inspect, but the officer who was to accompany us was out of the way, and except under his guidance, no consideration—not even a backshish—could prevail upon the Sheikh of the village to allow me to enter. A row of houses looks southwards; and, in ascending, I observed that the lower portions of their walls were laid with courses of ancient masonry. Beside the village green and pond there is an arched doorway of hewn stone, with a piece of an old wall attached, which is anterior to the Saracenic period; and farther north stands a square tower of similar construction. The ancient name of this place has perished, but it seems probable that Dr Robinson is correct in supposing it to have been one of a chain of fortresses along the southern frontier of Judah.

At this place, travellers coming from Nukhl used to be obliged to part with the Tiáhah, as they were at enmity with Abou Douk, the Sheikh of the Arabs of Khalíl, but things had changed of late. Abou Douk had been obliged to fly from Hebron, on account of an attack he had made on the town about two years before; and now, under the escort of a health officer, the Tiáhah are permitted to carry their passengers to the Lazaretto without hindrance. We were ordered to proceed along the path, and assured that our *Guardiano* would speedily overtake us, which he did, riding at full speed on a smart little horse, the first I had seen since leaving Cairo. Very shortly after two Sheikhs of the Hefr Arabs passed us on horseback—one a middle aged man, dressed in the striped aba usually worn by the Arabs; the other was attired in a red robe, like the younger Sheikh of the Tiáhah, blue petticoat-trousers and red boots. He had pistols in his girdle, a short carabine suspended to his thigh, the muzzle resting in his boot, and over his shoulder he carried a spear about fifteen feet long, without streamers of camel's hair or ornaments of any kind, and shod at the lower extremity with a steel point for

striking into the ground. This was the first time I had seen the spear, as it does not seem to be used by the Bedouins of the peninsula.

At 3.15, after a deep descent, we entered Wadi el Keis, running from N. west to S. east. A considerable portion of it was under cultivation, and the rest was occupied by flocks of broad-tailed sheep and goats and herds of horned cattle; the latter being as great a novelty as the horses to one coming from the Desert, where they are unknown. They were small rough animals, resembling very much the Highland breed. At 3.40 we entered another narrow wadi, from which the hills ascended rapidly on either side, covered with a tree which I at first took for the tarfa, but afterwards found to be the fir, and also with the balut, or evergreen oak. A shepherd boy informed us that this was Wadi Bufor. The hills around, all the way to Hebron, were similarly clothed with trees, which imparted a most cheerful aspect to the landscape, and called to mind some of the softer scenery of the Swiss valleys.

At 4.20 we began to ascend a steep pass between thickly wooded hills. On that to the right, overhanging the wadi we had left, there were ruins scattered about to such an extent as to denote the existence of a large town in former days. As we ascended the pass we came upon a chamber cut in the rock by the side of the path, having a doorway about two feet square, with a groove all round for a door to fit in. This at first I took for a tomb; but, on examining another exactly similar a little farther on, in which there was running water, I found that they were both apertures belonging to an aqueduct which had probably conveyed water to the town from two excellent springs by the road side, a few paces farther on. Neither the Quarantine soldier nor our Tiáhah knew the name of this ruin; but shortly afterwards we overtook a woodcutter, who told me that it was called Kharbet Ourmah. Fearful lest I should have been misinformed, or have made any mistake in the name, immediately on my arrival in Hebron I made further inquiries, and found that Kharbet Ourmah was well known. The Hebrew word Hormah, which means 'destruction,' was applied to a number of places which were either totally overthrown, or became the scenes of great slaughter. There was a Hormah (Numb. xiv. 45) near Seir or es Ser, where the Israelites were routed by the Amalekites and Canaanites after their rebellion in Kadesh. There was a Hormah, possibly the same, where, 39 years afterwards, Israel gained a victory over King Arad and the Canaanites (Numbers xxi. 3), though the narrative seems to indicate a different locality. There was Zephath, utterly destroyed by the Simeonites, and by them called Hormah.

—Judges i. 17. There was a Hormah among the cities to which David sent presents of the spoils of the Amalekites (1 Samuel xxx. 30); and there was a HORMAH belonging to the south of the tribe of Judah.—Joshua xv. 30, and 1 Chron. iv. 30. It is probable that the latter is that now represented by Kharbet Ourmah. Dr Robinson travelled along this path from Hebron to Beersheba without observing these ruins; but they are most readily distinguished on approaching from Dhahariyeh, as they face Wadi Bufor, and are much shut up by wood. Dr Wilson also passed this way, but in most unfavourable circumstances—in the midst of torrents of rain—so he had enough to do to look after himself. I found at Jerusalem that the residents there were not aware of the existence in this locality of ruins bearing that name, and I therefore commend them to the attention of some future traveller. Still ascending through a narrow wadi, with abundance of wood around, we came to a pass where other two wadis, one from the east, and another from the south, join it; and here there are the ruins of a Kasr or fortlet, which was intended to command all the three, called Dherideh. At this place we met a dozen women returning to Dhahariyeh from Khalil, where they had been to market. They were more fully clothed than the Egyptian women—their faces were not concealed—and instead of the long blue cotton scarf which the Egyptian and Bedouin women wear in addition to the yashmak, they had a neat white scarf fastened on the top of the head which hung down to the shoulders. The sight of the Guardiano inspired them all with a salutary fear of us—the word ‘Karantin’ flew from mouth to mouth—while they ran distracted after their sheep and calves to preserve them from contact with our camels; and not without reason, for if one stray sheep had got between the legs of a camel it would have infected all the flock, and probably the women too, and would have created quite a sensation in Dhahariyeh.

From the pass and ruin of Derideh we descended by a steep and very rough path into the beautiful Wadi Dilbeh. It comes from NW., increasing in width as it runs to the SE. Walking forward for about five minutes from the entrance, I perceived the ruins of another town covering the hill to the north, while at its base there is a large tank or pool built of hewn stones, and lined with cement, called Birket el Dilbeh. Having paced one side of it, I found its length to be thirty feet. An Arab of the place pointed out to me an aqueduct, covered with large stones, which he said brought down a constant supply of water from a spring near the top. A stream of beautiful clear water was running in it. The ruins bore the same name

as the wadi and birket. The whole valley was waving with green corn. A little farther on, in the same wadi, we came to an ancient draw-well, built with hewn stones, the name of which is Bir el Húgry. What may have been the name of this town in ancient days? If we consider the *Resh* to have been changed for the sake of sound into *Lamed*, we have in Dilbeh a sufficiently exact representation of the name **DEBIR** to permit us to conclude that this was the city taken by Othniel, Caleb's nephew, by which exploit he won his wife, and got it for her dower.—Judges i. 11-13. The vicinity of this place to Hebron, which Caleb received as his portion, and the springs in the plain and on the hill, taken in connection with an incident mentioned in Judges concerning Achsah, Othniel's bride, go far to establish the identity. 'And it came to pass, when she came to him, that she moved him to ask of her father a field; and she lighted from off her ass, and Caleb said unto her, What wilt thou? And she said unto him, Give me a blessing, for thou hast given me a south land; give me also springs of water. And Caleb gave her the upper springs and the nether springs.'—Judges i. 14, 15. If this be so, the place was one of renown in the times of the Canaanites, bearing the double name of Kirjath Sanna and Kirjath Sepher, the latter signifying the City of Books, or rather, perhaps, the City of Scribes.

At 5.15 we passed the mouth of a small wadi running into Wadi Dilbeh from the north, in which a number of Arabs were collected with their flocks, one of whom was playing vigorously on a double pipe, such as I had often heard in the villages round about Cairo. Shortly after passing this, we came upon the ruins of another town upon a hill to the north, with a channel for water cut in the rock, like that at Ourmah. The first Arab whom we asked for the name refused for a while to give any answer, but at last said they were called Dura; and as I knew there was such a place laid down on the maps in this neighbourhood, I supposed he might be correct; but on repeating the question to another Arab whom we met with his flock, and who was very civil and communicative, he told us that the ruins we had last seen were called Kharbet Khoursa, and that the aqueduct by which we were then standing conveyed water to the Bir el Húgry, in the plain behind us. May not this be traced through a natural enough transposition of the letters to **ZORAH**, mentioned among the fenced cities which Rehoboam built in Judah after the division of the kingdom?—2 Chronicles xi. 10. This Arab also told us that the ruins of Dura were beyond the hill to the left, which I found on inquiring at Hebron to be correct.

At 6.10 we arrived at the top of another pass, where there is a well

named Bir es Lunhor, when we were told that we had still an hour's march before us ere we could reach our destination. A pleasant prospect! as daylight was fast failing, and one of the camels was so done up that its load had to be distributed among the rest, occasioning much loss of time. Below us lay Wadi Keriyah, a beautifully cultivated valley, abounding with gardens, vineyards, and oliveyards. We were just able to cross it before we were enveloped in darkness; but as I was told we had only one other hill to surmount, I comforted myself with the prospect that in half an hour at most we should reach the Lazaretto. Vain hope! Ere we got to the top of the hill another camel gave in, and a new halt was called to readjust the burdens. The lights in the houses of Hebron now shone brightly in the valley below; but the descent to it, through a narrow path, amidst huge masses of rock—difficult enough even in daylight—was attended with new perils. One of the camels fell; another got jammed with his burden between two rocks, and stuck fast; a third drove in the side of the canteen, to the manifest detriment of what had escaped the morning's disaster; and from these difficulties we were only rescued by sending on one of the men to the Lazaretto for lanterns and a guide. Thankful were we when, at a quarter past eight, we entered the gloomy looking *Karantin* of Khalil, after having been for eleven hours and a half in motion. Thus I arrived at 'Kinjath-Arba, which is Hebron,' that ancient city 'built seven years before Zoan in Egypt;' and completed my journey through the great and howling wilderness with ardent thanksgivings to God, who had thus far brought me safely through all my wanderings.

After the first glance round the court-yard of my prison, I would fain have pitched my tent, as travellers used to do, on the green slope serving as the Mohammedan burying-ground, which lies between it and the town; but the Lazaretto has been built of late years expressly for the detention of travellers, and to afford an excuse for sponging them, and it was declared impossible to grant my request. Like most Lazarettos in the East, it has been constructed as if its object was to generate disease instead of removing it. It is built in a square nook of ground, which has been quarried out of the western hill for the purpose, and is surrounded on three sides by rock; indeed the wall to the rear, along which the cells are ranged, has been built so close to the overhanging cliffs as to preclude the passage of a current of air, while it imbibes all the moisture that exudes from them. The best apartments, on the other side of the court-yard, have been appropriated to the use of the doctor and the officials of the establishment.

which one can scarcely find fault with, considering they are fixtures all the year round, while the forced visit of travellers extends only to five days, including those of arrival and departure. In the court-yard are apartments for the servants and Bedouins. A steep flight of stairs leads up from thence to a gallery, on which half a dozen dark cheerless cells open for the reception of those who are victims of the Turkish sanitary regulations.

The two Englishmen in whose wake I had been following so long had left for Jerusalem the very morning of the day we arrived; so for the moment I had the rare privilege of being 'monarch of all I surveyed,' and I had ample time during my stay to inspect my domains. They were covered with the names of those who have undergone purgation at various periods since the erection of the building, the majority of whom were English and Americans, with a sprinkling of French, Germans, Greeks, and Arabs. In short, the walls of this establishment serve the purpose of the '*Livre des Etrangers*' in the hôtels of Continental Europe; and I give, as a specimen of the 'remarks,' and at the same time as a terse description of the place, the following words, subscribed with the name of Captain Peel, R.N., 1851, 'A prison, with the advantage of paying for it!' Some one of a more poetic or more desponding spirit, had inscribed over one of the doors the well-known words which Dante places over the portal of a more dreadful prison-house:—

'Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate.'

Though the same cell was allotted to me in which my Will-o'-the-Wisp countrymen had been confined, the fitness of the place for the habitation of human beings may be guessed at from the fact, that within a couple of hours my wearing apparel and bed-clothes were as damp as if they had been exposed to a shower of rain; and I awoke in the morning with a fit of ague. This somewhat lengthy description of the Lazaretto may be excused as its funeral dirge, for it is not probable that it will figure in the books of future travellers. I was the last victim to the absurdity of establishing a quarantine between two parts of the same empire, when both can furnish a clean bill of health; for, four days after our arrival at Jerusalem, it was officially announced that the Porte had done away with all quarantines on arrivals from Egypt, both by sea and land; and before I left it several gentlemen had arrived by the short Desert without any examination or detention at Gaza.

*February 17.*—Immediately on rising, I rushed out to the gallery to



ascertain if Hebron were within sight from the Lazaretto, as the previous night it was impossible, in the dark, to make out more from the flickering lights than that it was somewhere in the vicinity. I was pleased to find that, with the exception of a small portion hid by the doctor's apartments, the gallery commanded a view both of the town and of the valley towards the south; but as it rained hard, with a piercing cold wind, and I had great abundance of time for the study, I satisfied myself with a long gaze at the object of deepest interest, namely, the Mosque over the Cave of Machpelah, and deferred the rest till a more propitious opportunity. The first thing to be done was the payment and dismissal of the Bedouins, who were anxious to set out for Gaza to buy grain for the use of their families. Though not so obliging as the Towerah, they had served me well; so I gave Menhazen a backshish of 26 piastres, and divided a like sum among the other four. A further sum of thirty piastres was given Menhazen for the sheep he had presented me with on the evening we encamped near his tent; but at the same time I made Shaheen tell him, in presence of his men, that he had brought dishonour on the proverbial hospitality of the Bedouins by forcing a present on me, and then demanding payment for it, and that he would have had a larger backshish had he left it to my own generosity. They left my cell apparently satisfied; but a few minutes afterwards, a grand dispute arose in the court-yard between Shaheen and Menhazen, owing to an attempt made by the latter to appropriate some hair-ropes we had been obliged to buy at Nukhl, and when foiled, he left, loading the whole party with imprecations.

The only other incident which broke the monotony of the day, was finding in the court-yard a chameleon which had fallen from the wall benumbed with cold. When I took it up, it was nearly dead, and its colour then was deep brown; but having brought it into the vault where the servants were established, and laid it near the fire, it gradually recovered, and began to run about; and during the time I watched it, its colour changed, first to pale green, and afterwards to nearly jet black. It had only two toes on each foot, which were destitute of claws. The length of its body was about six inches; but it had a long ringed tail, which it curled round a stick or anything held out to it, and by which it hung like a monkey. In the afternoon the rain ceased for a little, and I improved the opportunity to study the view from my prison. The hill on which the Lazaretto is built is called Ghebel Obed Janeb, and forms the western boundary of the Wadi Khalf. Just opposite to it, on the other side of the wadi, is Ghebel

Beilún, on the side and at the base of which is built the modern town of Khalíl, which signifies 'the Friend' or 'the Beloved,' from the remarkable title given to Abraham, viz., 'the Friend of God.' The town is divided into four different quarters, of which the Hart esh Sheikh is the largest, extending, like the Jewish quarter beside it, into the bottom of the wadi. The other two are at the northern and southern extremities of the town; and in the latter, called Hart el Kadím, the Harám with the Mosque of Machpelah is situated—the burying-place of the three patriarchs and of their three wives. The wadi between the town and the Lazaretto is very narrow; but both below and above the town it opens into a very fertile plain under full cultivation, exhibiting vineyards and gardens, and fields of waving grain. Even now, with all the misrule inflicted on this land, the Vale of Mamre (for such it is) is a little paradise. Beyond the plain to the right, the bowl-shaped hills of the south of Judah, with their indescribable russet green hue, bounded the view. One ancient site alone was visible from the balcony on which I stood, that of Zif, the ZIPH of the tribe of Judah.

It is probable that the Hebron of Scriptural times stood much higher up the ascent of Ghebel Beilún than the modern Khalíl; and one of the *guardiani* told me that ruins can be still traced there, though, owing to the vineyard walls which run across it in every direction, it is impossible to distinguish them from a distance. But as it is scarcely credible that Ephron should sell Abraham a field to bury his dead at the very entrance to his own town, perhaps the site of Kirjath-Arba must be sought for farther to the north, if not on the hill at the western side of the wadi. On the north of the Lazaretto, Ghebel Eremédeh—a terraced hill overspread with venerable olive-trees, and crowned by a ruined castle—presents a prominent and very pleasant feature, but shuts out altogether from view the higher part of the wadi. Having spoken generally of the plain, both above and below the town, as one wadi, in which light it was probably regarded by those who knew Kirjath-Arba in Abraham's day, it must be noted that the modern inhabitants regard it as two distinct valleys. To the lower they give the name of Wadi Aádi, and that above the town they call Wadi Táffeh. On the sloping base of this quarantine hill, wet though the day had been, many Muslem women were seated by the graves of departed relatives, where they had come to weep and picnic. Such is the outline of the view I had before me for three days.

Although we cannot recognise in the modern name of Hebron any trace of its ancient appellation, there are few places in the Holy

Land the identity of which is better established. The Cave of Machpelah is a land-mark which has commanded successively the attention of the Jewish, Christian, and Mohammedan conquerors of the land; and the best proof of this is to be found in the fact, that the principal building in the Harám, viz., the mosque, with its pointed leaden roof, was originally a Christian church, built upon the ruins of a splendid mausoleum which Solomon erected over the resting-place of the fathers of the Jewish race.<sup>1</sup> Jew, Christian, and Mohammedan, have thus in turn kept guard over it. Hebron is probably the most ancient town on record which has a right to bear its original name at the present day, or at all events Damascus alone can share with it its age and its honours. A brief hint of its age is given in Scripture thus—‘Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt’ (Numbers xiii. 22); but unfortunately the key to this solution is not forthcoming, as there is no record of the founding of Zoan, unless some future palæologist may discover it among the enigmatical groups of the Egyptian obelisks. We know it was a city in the days of Abraham, three thousand seven hundred years ago, according to our Biblical chronology. When Israel came to dwell in the land, the neighbouring district was given to the aged Caleb, but the town itself fell to the lot of the priests, with some of the surrounding fields, and was made the city of refuge for the south, where many a man, whose hand had accidentally become embued in his brother’s blood, found safety from the avenger’s weapon. In Hebron David was anointed king; and for seven years, while the other tribes clung to the fortunes of the house of Saul, and ere the stronghold of the Jebusites on Mount Zion was taken, it enjoyed all the honour and importance of a royal city. In it Abner, the uncle of Saul, and commander-in-chief of his army, made a treaty with David for the adhesion of the other tribes of Israel; and the sepulchre in which David laid him, when treacherously murdered by Joab, is yet pointed out as one of the lions of the place. Over the pool which still supplies the town with water, David commanded the hands and feet of Ishbosheth’s murderers to be hung up; and the last mention made of it in Scripture is as the place where Absalom hatched his conspiracy against the person and throne of his aged father.

*February 18.*—This morning I had my first interview with the *Medico* of the establishment. We stood at the door of our respective apartments, and carried on a conversation in Italian across the yard.

<sup>1</sup> The chain of evidence establishing the identity of the Harám with the Cave of Machpelah is brought out by Dr Robinson (*Biblical Researches*, vol. ii., p. 436); and by Dr Wilson (*Lands of the Bible*, vol. i., p. 363).

He spoke Italian correctly and fluently, but with an accent that unmistakably revealed Germany as his fatherland. He had held his present situation only about four months, and during that time few prisoners had been under his charge. Anxious to improve the time by making acquaintance with the neighbourhood, I asked his permission to ascend the hill above the Lazaretto, attended by a *guardiano*, assuring him that I would avoid, like a leper, all those who were ceremonially clean; in doing which, by the way, I considered that I should be the gainer. He kindly complied with my request. The rain ceased, and the sun broke forth at noon; after which I lost not a moment in availing myself of the permission to escape for a little, and, attended by Shaheen, and a native of Hebron well acquainted with the surrounding localities, was very speedily on the top of Ghebel Obed Janeb.

The view from thence is very extensive, commanding three of the districts into which the territory of the tribe of Judah was divided, viz., the south, the hill country, and the wilderness. Below us lay the town of Khahl, the ancient pools, the Harám, and the plain of Mamre both above and below the town. The lower plain is planted with vineyards and oliveyards, until it is lost to sight by a sudden turn to the south about half a mile below the town. Away to the E. and NE. stretched swelling hills and long, wavey, straw-coloured downs, like fields whose grass has shot in autumn. It was the wilderness of Judea, or, as it is often called, the wilderness of En-ge-di, a region familiar to the prophet herdsman of Tekoa, and frequented by John the Baptist before his showing unto Israel; a region of few towns and scanty population, in which the scape-goat was set free to become the prey of wild beasts. A line drawn between two points, a little to the east of Hebron and Jerusalem respectively, will denote with tolerable accuracy its western border; the eastern was the shore of the Dead Sea. Parallel to it, the district called 'the hill country' extends from the hill on which we stood to Jerusalem, in the shape of a triangle, the base of which rests on Hebron and Dhahariyeh, and the apex on Jerusalem; and hidden from view by the mountains through which we had travelled from the plain of Bir es Saba, that portion of Judah's inheritance which was known as 'the valley,' forms another parallel strip to the west, embracing Philistia. 'The south country' again forms a broad platform, on which the triangular base of the hill country rests, stretching away into the Desert; but as it also is composed of a labyrinth of botryoidal shaped hills, it is difficult to determine where the hill country ceases and the south begins. Far

to the east lay the mountains of the land of Moab; and a deep gash between them and the nearer hills revealed the position of Lot's ancient dwelling-place, the once fertile plain of Siddim, but now the bed of the Dead or Salt Sea. To the south-east, bearing the shadows of the inky clouds above them, the barren mountains of Idumea stretched to Mount Hor, the lofty sepulchre of Aaron.

On the tops of the round hills which form the foreground to these distant objects, many ruined towns or villages are seen, some of which have been recognised as the identical places enumerated by Joshua, while others are either of later date or have undergone a change of name, or what is more probable, are only the villages which are mentioned as attached to the large towns. Directly over the Harám, on a hill to the north-east, is the first of these, which my guide pointed out as Kharbet Ben Anaim; next to it, on a hill a little farther east, is the village of Zif, up to which we could clearly trace the path that leads to Petra; and in the same direction, above the small Wadi Nazáreh, are the ruins of a place called Johúr. Turning the eye in a southerly direction, I saw distinctly the ruins of Kúrmel, and the positions of Maín and Yúttah were pointed out, lying behind intervening hills, as also the sites of other two towns, called El Ers, and Tenáger. Of the places here enumerated, Drs Robinson and Smith have identified four with cities mentioned by Joshua in the mountains of Judah,—viz., Zif, ZIPH; Kúrmel, CARMEL; Maín, MAON, the town of Nabal; and Yúttah, JUTTAH, a city belonging to the priests, most probably the abode of Zacharias, the birth-place of John the Baptist, and the scene of Mary's visit to her cousin Elizabeth. There are two others, which, from similarity in name and coincidence in position, I think might also be added to this list of ancient sites, viz., Ben Anaim, as identical with ANIM; and Johúr with ZIOR. I have since become aware that Dr Robinson writes the former name *Beni Naim*, and as he had the benefit of a most accomplished Arabic scholar as his companion, it is somewhat presumptuous to differ from him; my guide, however, distinctly pronounced the name Ben Anaim, and I wrote it down carefully at the moment. I find that Eusebius and Jerome, after making mention of a town called Anéa, nine miles to the south of Hebron, indicate another town, called by the one Anám, and by the other Aneám, as lying a little farther to the east, which corresponds exactly with the position of Ben Anaim.<sup>1</sup> Dr Robinson mentions that the Arabs have a tradition that Lot is buried there; and as the spot

<sup>1</sup> Relandi Palestine sub voce Anéa et Anim, p. 566.

on which the town stands is the most elevated in the region, it is not improbably the place where Abraham interceded with the Divine Angel for Sodom, and from whence, on the following morning, he saw 'the smoke of the country going up as the smoke of a furnace.' In speaking of the *Kasr es Sir*, which Dr Wilson proposes to identify with Zior, I have already stated my belief that it is the Scir, near Hormah, where the Israelites were defeated; for had Zior been situated so far to the south as this Sir, it could not have been reckoned among the mountains of Judah, but among 'the uttermost cities toward the coast of Edom southward.' The position of Johúr in the midst of other mountain cities already recognised, the fact that the Hebrew letter *Zain* is often converted into the Arabic *Jim* (as in the case of Zelzah, now called Beit Jala), and a certain affinity in sound between the names, has led me to the conclusion, that in the modern Johúr we must look for all that remains of the ancient Zior.

Leaving the eastern brow of Ghebel Obed Janeb, we wandered among vineyards enclosed by stone walls, each having its own 'cottage,' which is occupied sometimes by the proprietor's whole family, and at others by a watchman, during the ripening of the grapes and the vintage. Ascending to the roof of one of these, which stood on the southern face of the hill, another extensive view opened up in that direction. To the south Ghebel Haltukdar was pointed out to me, on which there were ruins called Kharbet Nayár; to the SSW. the direction of Shemua, the *ESHTEMON* of Joshua's list; to the SW. the direction of Kharbet Medámir; and on a hill nearly west, beyond the road by which we had travelled from Dhaharíyeh, the ruins of Doura, the *ADORAIM* of 2 Chron. x. 9. Gradually wandering round towards the north, we had an excellent view of the fertile Wadi Kheriyah, through which we had passed a couple of nights before in the dark, and eventually came down on the Dhaharíyeh road, which descends through the hollow between the hills Obed Janeb and Eremédeh.

The ruin which I had taken for a castle on the summit of the latter, the guide called 'Deir,' or Convent. It probably dates from the time of the Crusades, and contains a ruined chapel, which in later times has been used as a mosque. But this Deir has been built on the foundations of a much more ancient edifice, portions of which are still standing, and present to view blocks of a size which for centuries have never been used for building in this land. This is said by the Jews to have been a splendid monument which David raised over the grave of his father Jesse; though it is difficult to conceive why he was buried here in preference to his own native city Bethlehem, which is

only four hours distant. On entering through a narrow modern door into a court-yard, the first building facing us was the chapel of the convent, into one of the walls of which two ancient pillars had been built horizontally, while a third lay close by. They are perfectly plain, except a double flute round the top. Two low doorways, of much more ancient workmanship than the chapel, lead into small vaulted chambers, beneath one of which there is a dark vault, now broken open, which may possibly have served as a tomb. There are many cisterns around this building; and the traces of a road which once led up to it are distinctly visible in the rocks near the Lazaretto, which have been cut away in its construction. Beyond Tell Eremédeh, to the north, the cliffs descend precipitously to Wadi Táffeh below—a valley as rich in cultivation as the one to the south of the town. On the top of these cliffs is the burying-ground of the Jews of Hebron, whose graves are marked by large blocks of stones, which look as if they had lain for centuries in their present position. I examined them carefully, in the hope of finding some inscriptions, but could not discover a single letter. Looking up the Wadi Táffeh from this point, the ancient tree, which was known in Jerome's days as 'the oak of Abraham,' could be seen at its top, in the midst of vineyards; but tempting though the excursion was, it could not be made without meeting many people; and as I had not asked leave to descend to the plain, I deemed it prudent not to make too large a demand on the doctor's good nature, and returned to my quarters, resolving, if I could get permission, to visit it on the morrow. I met the doctor as I entered the Lazaretto, and leave was at once obtained.

Shaheen had informed me that the Jews made excellent wine from the grapes which grow in the valley; and as the next best thing to eating of the grapes of Eshcol, I made trial of their expressed juice. A small pot of it was brought in at dinner, and proved excellent. It was a black wine almost as luscious as lunel, but of a much stronger body. Its excessive sweetness arises in part from the grapes being thrown into the vat when they are over-ripe—the Jews having no vineyards of their own, and being obliged to buy the grapes in the market; and perhaps in part also from their want of skill in fermentation. In the hands of an inhabitant of one of the vine-growing countries of Europe, the grapes of Hebron would produce a most valuable and highly flavoured wine.

*February 19th* was the Lord's day, and in spirit I sought to join the worship in which my far-distant friends were engaged. I read especially those parts of Scripture in which mention is made of the

plain of Mamre, and of Abraham's 'entertaining angels unawares,' as I was about to visit the spot which by many is supposed to have witnessed that event. An Arab peasant was in sight all morning, ploughing with a couple of oxen the terraces of Tell Eremédéh. His plough was a more finished article than that of the poor Bedouins of Wadi el Arish, though still of the same simple and primitive form. In one hand he held the plough, and in the other the long ox-goad, shod at the top with a sharp iron prog for exciting his cattle, and at the other end with a small iron wedge for cleaning his wooden plough-share; an instrument which, in the time of danger, and in the absence of more lethal weapons, has been used for warfare by many since the days of Shamgar. He cheered his labour by a ditty consisting only of a few notes constantly repeated, but much more pleasant to the ear than the nasal drawl to which the Bedouins treat their camels every day, while they are in motion. He was a Mohammedan, and the Lord's day was not his day of rest. The false prophet, with the foresight and cunning which so peculiarly characterised him, selected as the day of rest one different both from that of the Jews and that of the Christians; no doubt the more effectually to separate his followers from both; and Friday is the Mohammedan Sabbath.

The day was one of bright sunshine; and cold and shivering from the damp of my cell, I set out with no ordinary pleasure at two o'clock to visit Abraham's oak, and to gain caloric by the exercise. We crossed over the shoulder of Tell Eremédéh, below the ruin I had visited the day before, and came upon a deep well called Ain Jedídy, to the bottom of which it is still possible to descend by a flight of much dilapidated stone steps; grooves in the wall at the depth of twenty feet below the surface mark where it had been formerly covered in with slabs of stone. The guide informed us that it supplied the Birket es Sultan, near the Harám, with water; and taking this information in connection with other three wells or reservoirs farther up the hill, which I was told all serve the same purpose, I have no doubt that these are openings to an ancient aqueduct which conveys water to the pool from some springs in the hills to the north-west. From thence we descended into Wadi Táffeh. The name at once suggests another of the mountain cities of Judah; and the subject is placed beyond doubt by a ruined site not far from the top of the wadi called Beít Táffeh, the BETH TAPPUAH of Joshua xv. 53. Keeping close under the brow of the hill where the Jewish burying-ground is, we came to a ruined tower, which still exhibits three stories, called Omr en Násr, which most probably belonged to the time of the



Crusaders. The second story contained one large vaulted hall, and the stair of access was constructed in the thickness of the wall. I should probably not have entered it, had I not observed, in looking into the black filthy apartment on the ground-floor, that it had originally been a Jewish sepulchre hewn out of the solid rock. It consisted of three chambers. The rock in front, in which the original entrance to the sepulchre must have been, had been broken down, and the front wall of the tower had been at a later period built up in its place. Inside, however, the side walls, the floor and the roof were perfect, all hewn in the rock, making a chamber twenty feet wide by sixteen in length. The inner chamber was of nearly the same dimensions, but the rocky wall between them had been also in great measure broken away. At the back of this chamber there was a third; the dividing wall being entire, except a little breakage about the low door, which, in its perfect state, could not have been more than two feet square. This chamber is of the same size with the two outer ones, but its walls are covered with plaster, the work of those who converted it in later times into a dwelling. The north, south, and west sides contain each three niches of seven feet long for interment, and near the entrance a narrow stair-case seemed to lead down to a lower chamber now choked up; but the whole was in such a shocking state of filth, that it was no easy matter to penetrate the interior. To the right of it there is another tomb cut out in the rock containing only a single niche, to which my guide gave the name of Abr Habroun, and two more to the left. I concluded, from Dr Wilson's description, that the larger tomb must be the one which the Jews call the Sepulchre of Othniel; and, on making inquiry of a group of Jews who were seated beneath an olive-tree not far from the spot, as I returned from my walk, I found I had guessed correctly. Although tombs in better preservation, and executed on a more costly scale, are to be found in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, I do not recollect any tomb beyond the vicinity of the metropolis which, for size and amount of excavation, can be compared with this one. For whom was it constructed? The Jewish tradition about Othniel is deficient in the *vraisemblable*, for his descendants would scarcely suffer the body of the founder of their house to be buried beyond the precincts of his own city Debir; but this may have been the tomb of Caleb, the original Jewish proprietor of the surrounding country; or it may have been the resting-place of some of the higher orders of the priesthood, as Hebron was a priestly city.

Crossing over ploughed fields, we came to the northern side of the wadi a little above the point where the Jerusalem road leaves it, and

kept along a road to the west, by the side of which there are two aqueducts leading to the town. The more ancient one, which is in some places cut through the rock, is no longer serviceable; but the other, constructed of terra-cotta pipes, laid at a much lower level, is still in use. A little further on, we came to a well called Ain Arab, from which these aqueducts are supplied; the well being itself supplied by another aqueduct coming in from the hill above to the north. Beside it two Arabs were prostrate at their devotions. A little nearer the town, on the opposite side of the road, there is another well called Ain Nerúch. Leaving the road a little beyond these wells, we took our way in a straight line to the *Babít*, or oak of Hebron, across a number of vineyards. In one of these, half an acre in extent, every vine had been cut over close to the roots. As this is not the mode in which they prune the vine in Palestine, I was struck with the ruin the field exhibited, and, on inquiry, was told that it was an act of vengeance on the part of some one bearing a grudge to the proprietor—one unfortunately which is very often perpetrated. Many hands must have been employed in the work of destruction; for the vines were old plants with thick stems, and they had all been cut over in a single night. The vineyard, our guide told us, had cost 6,000 piastres; it contained probably from 100 to 150 vines; and, as they reckon on each vine yielding annually eight piastres' worth of fruit, the cutting off of such a revenue for several years to come was no mean revenge. But it will be said there must be a remedy for such an outrage in the courts of justice. It may be so, if the injured proprietor can reach the authorities first; but it seems, by some strange freak in Turkish jurisprudence, that if an utter stranger were to plant some trees on a property thus cut over before the owner is aware of his loss, and then claim the property from the fact that he had planted on unoccupied ground, the case would be decided against the true proprietor.

The head of Wadi Táffeh is closed in by two hills. The one to the right is called Sibtah, and at its base grows Abraham's tree—a noble specimen of the evergreen oak—(*quercus ilex*). I paced round the circumference of its outmost branches, and found it measured 213 feet. To believe that this tree was the identical one under which Abraham sat, would require an amount of *gullibility* to which few men accustomed to exercise the right of private judgment would plead guilty. It is not at all beyond the bounds of probability, however, that this may have been the place where Abraham pitched his tent in Mamre; though another spot about a mile and a half farther east, where Constantine built a church over what is called 'Abraham's house,' presents a rival

claim. This place agrees very well with the situation of the terebinth or oak (for they give it both names), which was known as Abraham's tree in the days of Eusebius and Jerome, and which stood about two miles from Hebron. The latter, in his Commentary on Zechariah,<sup>1</sup> mentions that, after the reduction of Jerusalem by the Emperor Adrian, a great market was held under this oak, when many thousands of the unfortunate Jews were sold as slaves. I walked to the top of the hill Sibtah, and found a sepulchre cut in the rock, but nothing else worthy of notice. Looking northward there are ruins about a mile distant called Kharbet Nazáreh—a place once inhabited by Christians, as the name denotes. From Sibtah we retraced our steps along the same road, till we came to the place where that leading to Jerusalem leaves the valley. Instead of striking across the fields towards Eremédeh, we now followed the road leading down to the town—a part of which still exhibits some traces of ancient pavement—and crossing the Mohammedan burying-ground, reached the Lazaretto about half-past four. I met the doctor at the door, who gave me the welcome intelligence that I should be free to-morrow at day-break, and kindly volunteered to accompany me in my visit to the town before starting for Jerusalem.

*February 20.*—It may well be believed that this was a day of great excitement. The prospect of being again free had something to do with it; but that of seeing Bethlehem, and, if all went on satisfactorily, of being within the walls of Jerusalem before nightfall, had the largest share in producing it. During all Friday and Saturday we had been haggling with a certain Mahmoud, a mukhari (muleteer) of Khahl, and only came to an agreement on Saturday night—which was ratified by his handing me a dollar as security—that he should provide three camels for the transport of baggage, and two horses for myself and Shaheen; for the former of which I engaged to pay 25 piastres each, and twenty for the latter, with an additional backshish of ten piastres for himself. I was aware that it was a monstrous overcharge; but Mahmoud had this advantage over us, that we must either have taken him at his own price or delayed other two days until horses and mules could be ordered from Jerusalem. After seeing the camels loaded and despatched, I went to pay the *Medico* a visit, and in his company set out to view the town, after he had first gone through the formality of putting a *visé* to my passport, to ensure my not being repulsed at the gates of El Khúds. I found him a most intelligent

<sup>1</sup> Relandi Palest., p. 715.

man, and one who had visited many lands. He had lived seven years in Persia, had travelled along the banks of the Upper Euphrates, some of the scenery of which he described as very striking: and had ascended to the very summit of Mount Ararat—a work of three days, 24 hours of which were spent in clambering up the cone. He said the month of September was the only month of the year in which it could be ascended with safety, as previous to that avalanches were continually falling, and by the end of it fresh snow had already covered the mountain. Poor fellow! he must have a dull life in Hebron, where there is neither a European, nor, I believe, a Christian resident. He expressed profound surprise at the want of interest exhibited by the two English gentlemen who had been under his care previous to my arrival, as they had never stirred out of the Lazaretto during their stay, and on their release had set out at once for Jerusalem, without setting foot within the town of Hebron.

We crossed once more the Mohammedan burying-ground, in which there are three wells named after the three Patriarchs, which I believe to be only additional openings into the aqueduct that supplies the Birket es Sultan with water, as they are similar to, and on a straight line with, those I have already described on the hill. Yesterday my guide gave me the Mohammedan version of Abraham's purchase of the field in Mamre, of which transaction, as an example of *'cuteness* on the Patriarch's part, they seem remarkably proud, for it is retailed to all strangers. It is, that Abraham asked Habroun (Ephron) to sell him, for a stipulated sum, as much land as a cow's hide would cover; and that, a bargain having been struck, the Patriarch cut up his hide into thongs, and, joining these together, claimed as his own the circle which he surrounded with them. The true version of the matter we know, from an inspired source; but whence the origin of this story? It is not a new one to the classical reader; but it would be a curious question for some scholiast to determine whether Virgil borrowed his story from the children of the Desert, or whether the cow's hide was a measure for land in the East, known from the borders of the Desert to the shores of Tyre, and carried from thence to Carthage, thus affording to both tales a common origin; for it is utterly absurd to suppose that the unlettered Ishmaelites have been guilty of plagiarism on the Latin poet.

Our first visit was to the Birket es Sultan, the larger of the two pools, which is situated in the bottom of the wadi, a little to the NW. of the Harám. There was abundance of water in it, which is used by the inhabitants for drinking, though it was of a reddish

colour, and looked abominably dirty. Its dimensions are 133 feet square, and 21 feet 8 inches in depth. There are two flights of steps leading down to the water, one at the north east angle, the other at the south west. The smaller pool, which we afterwards visited, is 85 feet in length by 55 feet in breadth, and 18 feet in depth. A crowd of water-carriers were clustered round them both, filling their skins, or preparing to carry them into the town. From thence, through dirty narrow streets, we threaded our way to the Harám—the enclosure of the mosque—which stands over the cave of Machpelah. As it is reckoned by Mohammedans one of the most holy places in Palestine, entrance to it is strictly forbidden both to Jews and Christians. The doctor and I of course were excluded as Christians, but Shaheen entered; and his account of it was, that the mosque itself was *magnifica*, and that round the court there were many smaller places for devotion, but that he had observed no indications of vaults. We saw the immense stones forming the lower courses of the enclosing wall, which are similar in point of workmanship and appearance to those I afterwards saw at the south-east corner, and in the western wall of the Harám es Sherif at Jerusalem. The mosque is evidently of Christian workmanship, and dates from the time of the Crusades; the form of its windows and its pointed roof betraying its western origin. From the hill above it, to which we ascended for the purpose of obtaining a better view, we discovered that this *quondam* Christian church, though the most conspicuous building, is yet but one of a multitude within the enclosure, the domes and minarets of which contrast curiously with the nobler and sterner pile around which they are grouped.

We next strolled through the bazaars, which are poor and dirty, to the tomb of Abner, which, if it be genuine, contains also the head of Ishbosheth the son of Saul. We had some difficulty in making good our entrance, as it is within a private dwelling-house, and the Arab master was absent. Shaheen protested that we should get into difficulties if he returned and found his house invaded by Franks; but not apprehending any great danger, we lifted the latch and walked in. The tomb exhibits no signs of great antiquity, though possibly there may be a vault below. It is a square piece of masonry, about four feet high, rising to a ridge at the top, and it stands in a small chamber walled in on all sides, so that one can only look at it through an unglazed aperture about a foot square.

Our next visit was to the Jewish synagogues, of which there are two in the town, one belonging to the Ashkenazim or German, and the other to the Sephardim or Spanish Jews. They are simply rooms

set apart for the purpose in two of the Jewish houses, and, with the exception of one or two inscriptions in Hebrew, there is no attempt whatever at internal decoration. That of the Sephardim, which is the largest, was empty when we entered; but a number of men crowded in along with us or followed from curiosity, and some began to beg. From one of them, who spoke Italian, I learned that they reckoned their numbers at about 200. In the synagogue of the Ashkenazim, which is smaller than the other, there were about twenty people present, performing the daily prayers. Each wore a phylactery on his brow, fastened round the head by leathern thongs. This article resembles exactly in shape a soldier's cartouche-box, within which are deposited slips of parchment inscribed with sentences from the law of Moses; and as they keep the head in constant motion, and violently contort the body while they vociferate their prayers, the impression produced upon an utter stranger would certainly be that he had got into a company of jabbering maniacs. For my own part, the corporeal part of their worship reminded me exceedingly of the exhibitions of the howling Dervishes, and the rapidity and violence of tone with which they prayed, prompted involuntarily the thought that they expected to 'take the kingdom of heaven by violence.' Earnest indeed they were, but the earnestness seemed to expend itself in outward action, the perspiration in many instances running down like a stream, from the bodily fatigue they were undergoing. Alas! how true the words of St Paul concerning his nation: 'Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.'—Rom. ix. 31, 32. Leaving the synagogue of the Ashkenazim we visited a Yivisoth, or room set aside for the use of the doctors or scribes, who study the Talmud and other Rabbinical treasures. There were a dozen of men seated at tables running round the room, with a number of much used tomes and parchments before them; some seemed to be employed in reading and meditation, and others in copying out passages from the books before them. A few words of conversation passed with one of them, the others continuing their occupations. In the days of Jewish prosperity, the outward accommodation provided for those who made literature their profession, would, no doubt, be very different from that with which these poor students have to content themselves; but I pleased myself with the thought, that the scene now before us pictured forth substantially the manner in which the doctors and scribes of former days pursued their studies. Considering that Hebron is reckoned one of the five sacred

cities of the Jews in Palestine, I was astonished to find that the entire Jewish population of the place did not amount to more than 300 persons. The Sephardim dress as Orientals, wear the turban, and shave the head; the Ashkenazim, on the contrary, approach more the European style of dress, wear a low-crowned beaver hat, or sheepskin cap, and allow their hair to fall in lanky ringlets over the temples and down the shoulders; so that, generally speaking, whenever you meet a man with long sandy locks, you are safe to conclude that he is a Polish Jew.

The last visit we made was to a glass manufactory, for which Hebron is famous. It is conducted on a very small scale, and its operations are confined to the production of transparent flasks and druggist's phials; but these seem to be of good quality, as they are found exposed for sale in all the bazaars of Syria, as well as in those of Cairo. The silex required for the operation, I was told, was brought from the neighbourhood of Cairo. The workmen were very willing to exhibit the different processes of their craft, and after having blown one of the small medicine flasks, the operator turned round and asked, with an air of triumph, if the Inglez had any such manufactories. When answered in the affirmative, they all shook their heads in manifest unbelief. If we had had a decent black bottle with us, we might have produced some conviction; but as nothing short of ocular demonstration would have been of any use, we gave them a backshish and departed. Near the gate, beside the smaller pool, great was my surprise in stumbling upon a small encampment of Gipsies, consisting of five tents. Like their brethren in Britain and elsewhere, they were employed in tinkering pots and pans, and they were said to possess the thievish propensities which seem to pervade the whole family wherever its members are found. Having passed the Hart es Sheikh, I bade adieu to the kind-hearted doctor, and mounted a rough brown pony with a broad Turkish saddle and shovel stirrups, so short, and hung so far behind the natural position of the legs when on horseback, that I was destined to endure more pain and fatigue in a six hours' ride, than I had done in all the thirty-five days I had been travelling on camels. The worst bridlepath in the Swiss mountains is a *macadam* in comparison with the road between Khalil and Jerusalem.

We left Hebron at half-past ten o'clock, riding up Wadi Táffeh until we came to the cistern called Bir Ibn Achmedán, where the Jerusalem road turns to the north, beyond which for a short way we passed enclosed vineyards on either side. A quarter of an hour brought us opposite the Kharbet en Nazáreh, which I had seen to the north

of Tell Sibtah yesterday. Nearly opposite to it, on the right of the road, is a small wadi, which I afterwards learned from Mr Nicolayson still bears the name of Wadi 'Skal, the Eshcol of Scripture, so famed for its clusters of grapes, and which is still dedicated to the growth of the vine. At eleven o'clock we passed a road branching off from the one we were following, which also leads to Bethlehem by Halúl and Tekúa, two villages still bearing their ancient names. At a short distance down this path, there is a ruin of large dimensions which Mahmoud called Er Ramah.<sup>1</sup> This the Jews call 'the house of Abraham,' believing it to be the place where he dwelt in Mamre; and the ruins are no doubt those of the church which Constantine is said to have built in commemoration of its history. Neither terebinth nor oak now are found in the vicinity, and if this be the spot, Abraham certainly did not dwell in the *plain* of Mamre. From this point the mosque of Nebi Younes ('the prophet Jonas') at Halúl was a conspicuous object in the landscape, but the village itself was not seen. Dr Wilson mentions a place by the roadside near this, called Beit Ainum, the BETH-ANOTH of Joshua, but unfortunately it escaped my observation. Our road presented an endless series of ascents and descents over ledges of calcareous rock, till at 11.20 we arrived at a fountain called Ain ed Dirweh, at the right side of the road, round which many of the peasant women of the neighbourhood were gathered. There are traces of an ancient site around it; one or two courses of stones, with bevelled edges, are still standing by the road side, and the perpendicular cliffs behind are riddled with sepulchral chambers. On the left of the road, not more than a hundred yards distant from the fountain, with a narrow glen intervening, is a ruined tower, to which the women gave the name of Beit Zur, the BETH-ZUR of Joshua's list, and to it probably belonged the ruins by the well and the sepulchres beyond. Mahmoud called the tower Kharbet Nedjem. I asked if he knew the village of Sair, and he at once pointed out its direction towards the north-east, four hours distant. It is more probable, as suggested by Dr Wilson, that the well of Sirah, by the side of which Joab's messengers overtook Abner, is to be found in the neighbourhood of that village, than in this Ain ed Dirweh, which Messrs Bonar and M'Cheyne have suggested as the locality, for it is in a more direct line with the fords of Jordan, to which, no doubt, Abner would travel by the shortest route in order to reach Mahanaim.—2 Samuel iii. 26. At twelve o'clock we passed through the

<sup>1</sup> Robinson calls it Ramet el Khalil.



ruins of a large town lying on both sides of the road, which the mukhari called Beit Haran. The hill to the right was quite covered with them. Neither Drs Robinson nor Wilson make any mention of these ruins, though they must have passed through the midst of them. Looking back towards the SE., an excellent view of the village of Halúl, with the mosque of Jonas, is obtained from this point. On a hill, probably two or three hours distant, to the NE., stands the village of Beit Fadjar, erroneously called by Dr Wilson Hajar. The road still continued to lead over hill and dale; but with the exception of some growing corn now and then in the bottom of a wadi, the country generally presented no sign of cultivation, being devoted entirely to pasture. The vine-growing district did not extend more than a couple of miles beyond Hebron, but we came upon it again at Bethlehem, from whence it extends by the valley of Rephaim and Jerusalem to the northern boundary of the tribe of Judah. In this adaptation of different parts of the country to the growth of the vine and to the pasturage of cattle, we recognise the striking fulfilment of Jacob's prophecy concerning the allotment of Judah, who was to inherit the honours of the first-born, 'Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine. . . . *his eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk.*'—Gen xlix. 11, 12.

At 12.40 we saw the modern village of Aúáfneh on a hill to the left, and a quarter of an hour afterwards we passed, on the top of another, also to the left, ruins of a considerable size, which Mahmoud called Offéen. The southern cliffs of the hill on which it is built exhibit three tiers of tombs rising one above another. There are also remains of steps cut in the rock by the wayside, and a *birket*, now much broken down, but apparently not much smaller in dimensions than the lesser pool at Hebron; all affording proof that it once was a town of Judah. A solitary caruba tree grows by the roadside, but on the hill itself there is an olive grove among the ruins. From the mention made by Dr Robinson of the reservoir and olive trees, I presume this is the place to which he gives the name of Abu Fid, and Dr Wilson that of Kúfín or Kúfíl; but on arriving at Jerusalem I learned that Mahmoud's information was correct and that the place is perfectly well known by the name of Offéen. To the east of north from these ruins, about half a mile distant in a straight line from them, and about a quarter of a mile from the nearest point of the road, there is another ruined place, to which the mukhari gave the name of Khárbet Aróub, and a fertile valley lying at the bottom of the hill, which runs down among the hills on the right towards the Dead Sea,

is the Wadi Aróub. I have no doubt that the Khárbet Aróub is the ARAB in Joshua's list of towns in the hill country; and it is not improbable that in Offéen we have, in a corrupted form, the name of ESHEAN, another town in that district, which must have been in the vicinity of Arab, as it is mentioned in the same verse.—Joshua xv. 52.

From Wadi Aróub we passed over a low ridge into Wadi Merimah, a very large wadi, likewise running to the east, from which we had a nearer view of Beit Fadjar on the hill to the right. Ascending another hill covered with arbutus shrubs, we came to a cistern cut in the rock, for holding rain water, called Esbil Hagar, constructed as a work of merit by a private Moslem named Esbil, for the refreshment of passers by. There are steps leading down into it, which give too easy access; and in consequence, the Mohammedans perform their ablutions in it before going to prayer—a notice of which ought certainly to be stuck up for the information of the unsuspecting traveller. From this cistern we saw to the west, on the high ground above the wadi we had just left, a ruined tower bearing the name of Kharbet Merimah, and on a hill to the north, ruins which Mahmoud called Iberakút; probably the same mentioned by Dr Wilson as Bereikút, and supposed by him to be the BERACHAH from which the valley of blessing, mentioned in 2 Chronicles xx. 26, derived its name. At two o'clock we descended into the head of Wadi el Biar (of Wells), a long narrow valley running north, which, during excursions from Jerusalem at a later period, I found discharged its waters into Wadi Artas. It contains three ancient wells, now much choked up with rubbish, which, according to my guide, used to supply one of the aqueducts leading to Jerusalem. It is probable that these may have belonged to an aqueduct feeding the pools of Solomon; for in passing over the hill from this valley to them, I traced distinctly an aqueduct running in that direction, which Mahmoud said was partially tunnelled through the hill. It took half an hour to ride down this wadi to the hill just mentioned. About midway the second well is met with, and exactly opposite it, on the hill to the west, is the village of Beit Ummar. In a line with it, but on the other side of the hills which bound the wadi to the east, lies Tekúa. The road over the hill which separates Wadi Biar from the pools of Solomon is atrocious, and would be perfectly impracticable for an English horse; yet the little sure-footed animals of the country get over it without accident if their riders will only leave them to pick their own steps. In three places on this hill there are distinct traces of a paved Roman road, and at other points evidences of its having been cut through the solid rock, which rather

militates against Dr Robinson's assertion, that chariots never could have travelled between Jerusalem and Hebron. For many centuries, however, the mode of conveyance has been on horseback or camels; and the narrow track through which my horse clambered, has been worn by their tread fully four feet below the level at which the chariot road had been originally cut in the rock. From the summit of the hill I saw below me to the right, in the valley we had left, a ruined edifice within a square enclosure. This is the Deir el Banát, or Convent of Ladies, established in the time of the Crusaders. From the tradition which our mukhari repeated to me, it appears that the nuns of this convent did not bear a higher reputation for morality than that usually ascribed to their sisters in Popish Europe at the present day. Beside this convent is the third well of Wadi Biar.

The density of the population of this district of the country, when inhabited by Israel, may be inferred from the fact, that between Hebron and the Pools of Solomon, during a slow ride of four hours and a half, we passed the site of eight ancient towns, six of which have been identified, namely, Halúl, Beth-anoth, Beth-zur, Eshean, Arab, and Berachah. The other two, which have not yet been identified, are Beit Harán and Beit Ummar. In the same district I could only observe four insignificant modern villages, one of which was two hours distant among the hills. Well indeed may this be called 'a land forsaken of its inhabitants.'

A rough and precipitous road brought us down, at three o'clock, to the Pools of Solomon, three in number, which are situated on successive levels at the head of Wadi Artas. Their vast extent, and the solidity of their workmanship, afford satisfactory proof of the wealth and magnificence of King Solomon; while in such a country nothing could display his wisdom more than providing an ample supply of water for his capital. A square Saracenic fortress has been built by the side of the pools, called Khalat el Burak; but it is now uninhabited and falling into ruins. During my residence in Jerusalem, I made several visits to these pools, and will take another opportunity of describing them. The day was fast wearing on, and the fear of being shut out of the gates of Jerusalem if we arrived after sunset, prevented me on this occasion from doing more than taking a hasty glance at them in passing. There are two ways which lead from hence to Jerusalem; one along the side of Wadi Artas, following the course of the aqueducts, the other over the hill to the NE. of the pools; and as the latter was the shorter one, we chose it.

In twenty minutes we caught sight of a town on a hill before us,

the first view of which, on approaching from the SW. as we did, is not a little imposing. The walls, which still surround it on this side, give it an air of strength; and its entire extent from west to east being visible from this road, leads one to suppose it much larger than it is in reality. The hills all around were bleak and naked, and through the openings among them there were occasional glimpses of the dark mountains of Moab in the distance. This town was Bethlehem, the cradle of our blessed Lord! At length I had before me the sacred spot, where, so far as its earthly history is concerned, our redemption took its beginning. It would be a difficult matter to analyse the thrilling feelings of joy and reverence and awe which arose as I gazed on the scene before me. True, it was the city of David, and on these hills the shepherd lad had fought both the lion and the bear; and it was the city of Boaz, where all the incidents in Ruth's interesting history occurred; but, as the morning star pales before the rays of the rising sun, these fade in importance, to one gazing on Bethlehem for the first time, 'by reason of the glory which excelleth.' In that town, 'little among the thousands of Judah,' the Lord Jesus was born, 'made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law.' Somewhere in this neighbourhood the angelic host sang their hallelujahs, in honour of that great event, in strains which roused the shepherds from their drowsy watch. From the heaven above the bright star in the east shot down its rays upon the stable where the infant Saviour lay, guiding thither the wise men of the East—a Gentile deputation, in fulfilment of the prophecy, 'the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.'—Isa. lx. 3. In Bethlehem, too, the first striking example was given of the truth of the saying afterwards uttered by Jesus: 'I am come not to send peace on earth, but a sword,' in the slaughter of its innocent children—victims of the jealousy and hatred which Herod bore to Him who was 'born King of the Jews.'

On the side from which we approached it, we look in vain for the plains which we are wont to associate with the shepherds and their flocks. A level plateau on the eastern side of the town is now pointed out as the place where the angel appeared to them; but then, as now, no doubt the hills were set apart for the pasture of flocks, and the wadis and level places were sown with grain. Time forbade a visit to the town; but, sending the camels on before, I rode up the side of the hill on which it is situated to have a better view of it, and saw its only remaining gateway, perhaps the one in which Ruth's fate and fortunes were decided in the presence of the elders. A deep wadi, beginning

at the point where I had caught the first view of Bethlehem, runs away northward, dividing the hill on which it stands from another to the west covered with olive trees, in the midst of which, looking more cheerful and prosperous than any village I had yet seen in the East, lies Beit Jala, the ancient ZELAH (Josh. xviii. 28), one of the border towns of the tribe of Benjamin, and the ZELZAH of the Book of Samuel.—1 Sam. x. 2. The descent from the hill of Bethlehem towards this valley is long and very gradual, and on its flank, a little in advance of Bethlehem, a solitary domed building, glaring with white-wash, attracts the eye, and would naturally be supposed the Wely of some Mussulman saint. If, under such an impression, you were to pass it without any question, you would commit a great mistake. That is the Kábbet Rahíl, the burying-place of Rachel, the favourite wife of Jacob. It agrees in every respect with the account given us in the sacred narrative of the place of her death and burial. Her time of sorrow overtook her when ‘there was but a little way to come to Ephrath;’ and ‘Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem; and Jacob set a pillar upon her grave: that is the pillar of Rachel’s grave unto this day.’—Gen. xxxv. 16, 19, 20. In the time of Moses that pillar still stood near Bethlehem, and we may rest assured that after Israel’s occupation of the land it would not be forgotten. Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians agree that this is the spot; and it corresponds with the situation of her grave not only in respect of its vicinity to Bethlehem, but also as being ‘in the border of Benjamin at Zelzah.’—1 Sam. x. 2.

For additional evidence that this is truly Rachel’s grave, and, at the same time, for a very interesting elucidation of a somewhat obscure prophecy applied to Bethlehem, we are indebted to the accurate investigations of Mr Finn, her Majesty’s Consul in Jerusalem, who, not very long before my arrival, had discovered the site of an ancient town a little below the Kábbet Rahíl, to which the people of the neighbourhood give the name of *Er Ram*, RAMAH. There were many towns of the same name, but this is the Ramah in which the Prophet heard the voice of lamentation and weeping. Its immediate vicinity to this tomb explains why Rachel is introduced as weeping for her children; and the obscurity in which, while unfulfilled, the prophecy was designedly enveloped, sufficiently accounts for the scene of the catastrophe being indicated by the mention, not of Bethlehem, but of the neighbouring Ramah of Rachel. It has been conjectured, since the discovery of this Ramah, that it must also have been Ramathaim Zophim, the dwelling-place of Samuel, where Saul was

anointed king when he went thither to inquire about his father's asses. A little study, however, of the passage in 1 Sam. x. will demonstrate the unlikelihood of this. The ruins Er Ram are within two or three hundred yards of the tomb of Rachel; and had this been the Ramah of Samuel, at the gate of which he parted with Saul, it is inconceivable that he should have spoken of Rachel's sepulchre in terms implying that it was at a distance. Besides, there is no place in the neighbourhood that could be called a high place except it were Bethlehem itself, or the hill above Beit Jala. As Zelzah, Rachel's tomb, the Mount of God, viz., Moriah, and a place called the Plain of Tabor between the two latter, are all specified as so many successive stages on Saul's journey *northward*, I think Ramathaim Zophim must be sought to the south of Rachel's tomb; and in the absence of a better locality, I am disposed for the present to adopt Mr Van de Velde's suggestion, that 'the house of Abraham' near Hebron, which my guide called *Er Rámah*, was the dwelling-place of Samuel, as that must have belonged to the land of Zuph or Zoph, which still is represented by the village of that name.

When Dr Robinson passed, this sepulchre of Rachel was fast falling to decay. Its restoration, I was informed, was the work of Sir Moses Montefiore on his first visit to Palestine. The building consists of two apartments, viz., an ante-chamber without a door; and an inner one containing the sepulchre, secured by an iron door, which, on this and many subsequent visits, I always found locked. In a rock tomb close by, the skulls and bones of some of Ibrahim Pasha's soldiers are now mouldering, who fell here in his disastrous retreat from Syria in 1836. Crossing over the shoulder of the hill, we descended into another wadi running to the east, from which there is an excellent view of the northern side of Bethlehem. In this valley, the course of the aqueduct which leads from the Pools of Solomon to Jerusalem is distinctly seen; it is not, however, the aqueduct of Solomon, but one said to have been built by Pontius Pilate, and renovated by the Saracens after their occupation of the land. Another steep ascent brought us to the Greek convent of Mar Elias, prettily situated on the top of the hill, surrounded by a grove of olive trees. The superior and his *soi disant* wife were sitting by the roadside as we passed, beside a slight cavity in the limestone rock, which the inmates of the convent assert to have been formed by the body of Elias, while he slept here on his way to Beersheba. A hundred yards beyond this, Jerusalem burst upon my view, about two miles distant. It would have been a relief to have had a like-minded companion,

in conversing with whom I might have given vent to my pent-up feelings. The sight of Bethlehem, and the grave of Rachel, which bring the realities of Scripture history so strikingly before the mind, had already greatly affected me; and I am not ashamed to confess that tears started to my eyes as I looked, for the first time, on the once highly-favoured, but now forsaken city. The last hour's ride seemed to embrace an epitome of our Lord's earthly sojourn. I had but just left the place of his birth, and there before me lay the scene of his cruel and accursed death. If the event which happened at Bethlehem awoke the choral strains of angels in the neighbourhood of earth, 'the decease which Christ accomplished at Jerusalem' has become the burden of the saints' sweetest and most fervent song in heaven, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain!'

If you would see Jerusalem in beauty still, you must approach it from the north. The view which I now had before me was disappointing, but on that account, perhaps, more in keeping with its present humble condition. A bare grey wall, with one large white building, the Armenian convent, surmounting it, is all that meets the eye on approaching El Khuds from the south. The day contributed its share to the melancholy impression which Jerusalem made on me. There was not a ray of sunshine; the mist hung over the western hills, and a dull, pale light imparted to all the surrounding objects a sombre hue. A few steps more brought us to the well of the Magi, in the middle of the road; on looking down into which, it is said, they perceived with joy the reflection of the guiding-star, which they had lost for a time. We now emerged upon an open plateau, and the plain to the left was the valley of Rephaim, in which David conquered the Philistines. A deep ravine lay between us and the city, and beyond it, projecting towards us, was the Hill of Zion, without a building, sprinkled thinly with olive trees, and 'ploughed like a field.' Gradually the landscape widened, and 'the mountain which is on the east side of the city' (Ezekiel xi. 23) came into view. It was the Mount of Olives, the last ground the Saviour's feet ever trod on earth. The hill itself has no natural beauty; the interest it excites lies wholly in the associations connected with it. A mosque crowns its summit; a few olive trees grow upon its sides, but the grain was not sufficiently advanced to clothe it with verdure; and, from the habit artists have of embellishing their drawings of it, the first impression I received was one of keen disappointment at finding it bare, and so diminutive in height. I speak now only of the first impression, though I am still of opinion that most drawings of it are liable to the charge of exaggeration. I

afterwards found, on looking at it from the Valley of Jehoshaphat, that I had not made sufficient allowance for the height of the plateau along which I had travelled, and of the shoulder of Moriah over which I had first seen it. After a while, I had a glimpse of the mosque of El Aksa, and of the beautiful dome of Sakhara, which is usually, though erroneously, called the mosque of Omar. That, too, was sacred ground—the site of the Temple, where the worship of the true God had been so long maintained amid surrounding darkness; but I had scarce looked on it when a turn of the road again shut it out from view. On the right hand, as we approached the edge of the deep ravine before us, was the hill of Evil Counsel, with a ruin which is said to have been the country-house of Ananias the high-priest, when the plot was laid for the death of Jesus; and hard by stands a poor stunted tree, which you are gravely told is that on which Judas hanged himself!

We were now on the brink of the deep gorge which separates the Hill of Zion from that of Evil Counsel. It was the valley of the Son of Hinnom, which, coming down from the west, runs eastward till it joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat at the south-east extremity of the Hill of Ophel. It is called now Wadi Gehenna, or Valley of Hell! The path turns to the west, and makes a gradual descent into this wadi, passing by the side of the Birket es Sultan, which, like the pools of Solomon, has been constructed by drawing a wall of immense thickness across the whole breadth of the valley. A small bridle path leads up the northern side of the valley under the citadel, or Castle of David, to the Bab el Khalil, at which we arrived just in time to make good our entrance. Shaheen had ridden on from Mar Elias to give warning that our party was approaching, and, if necessary, to keep the gate open till our arrival, by administering a backshish;—a wise precaution, though luckily not necessary in our case. But a few years ago who would have dreamt of a hotel in Jerusalem? Now there are two, with rival *commissionaires* stationed at the gate to solicit the traveller's patronage. One of these put a letter into my hand, which declared that Her Majesty's Consul recommended Hauser's Mediterranean Hotel as being clean and comfortable; and on the faith of so respectable a certificate I directed my steps thither, and had no reason to regret my choice. Two remarkable buildings present themselves immediately on entering: these are the ancient tower of Hippicus and the modern English Church. A chilly feeling of desolation came over me as I reached the little piazza inside the gate, for the town seemed a desert. A broad pool of water extended quite across the street, through which our horses had to wade; the



houses in the steep narrow street we descended had all a poverty-stricken appearance, and, with the exception of the soldiers on guard, we hardly met half a dozen people between the gate and the hotel! Can this be the place of which it was once said, 'Thou that art so full of stirs, a tumultuous city, a joyous city?' How different its aspect now, 'trodden under foot until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled!'

My solitary journey from Cairo to Jerusalem had occupied exactly 39 days; and now that it was brought to a close, my heart was full of gratitude and praise to God, through whose goodness and protecting care it had been accomplished without accident or disagreeable mishap of any kind. The mukhari was soon dismissed, and Shaheen despatched to the Consulate for letters, as I had not heard from home since I left it. He returned empty-handed; but with the tidings that he had seen with the Consul a signore, my *grand' amico*, who was about to pay me a visit, and had charged himself with the delivery of my letters. I was still puzzling my brain to guess who this might be, when, to my surprise and great joy, my old and intimate friend, Mr James Graham of Limekilns, appeared, and, with a hearty welcome to Jerusalem, put a packet of letters into my hand. He had been already some months in the Holy City; and the prospect of his society and advice during my stay, added greatly to the pleasure of finding myself within its walls. The pleasure, however, was not without its alloy, for my letters from home brought tidings of the severe illness of all my children; and a period of greater anxiety I have rarely known than the first fortnight of my sojourn on Mount Zion, ere another mail brought more favourable tidings.



Abraham's Tree near Hebron.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## JERUSALEM.

My stay at Jerusalem extended to a month, and as during that time my visits to the same localities were often repeated, the reader's patience will be more lightly taxed by giving the results in the shape of a connected narrative than by continuing a journal of daily occurrences. The Psalmist conveys a correct idea of the character of the surrounding country, in the words, 'The mountains are round about Jerusalem' (Psa. cxxv. 2), though the inhabitants of an Alpine district might be disposed to apply a humbler name to the neighbouring heights. The situation of Jerusalem itself it is more difficult to describe. It stands on a double promontory at the SE. extremity of a wide expanse of open but elevated and very irregular ground, bounded on the west by the hills above the Convent of the Cross, on the east by the Mount of Olives and its continuations, on the north by Nebi Samwil, and on the south by the hills about the Convent of Mar Elias. On approaching the city from the high ground to the north-west, the hill of Zion does not appear at all elevated above its level, while Moriah is positively below it. These hills owe their origin to the deep ravines by which receding waters have intersected and surrounded them. Even now, to form any adequate idea of them, one must go down into the bottom of these ravines, when their height and dimensions become satisfactorily disclosed. These ravines are four in number: two embracing nearly the whole circuit of the city in their irregular course; the third running right through its centre, and dividing from one another what for the present I shall characterize, for brevity's sake, as the *two* ridges of Moriah and Zion, on which it was originally built and still stands. One of these ravines is the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which, taking its rise at some distance to the NW. of the present walls, runs east till it gets beyond their NE. angle, then south along the whole extent of the eastern wall, and finally turns to the east again about a

quarter of a mile below the southern walls of the modern city. The other is the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, which takes its rise to the west of the city, and circling the western and southern sides of the hill of Zion, joins the Valley of Jehoshaphat, where it makes its final turn to the east. The third rises to the north of the city walls above the Damascus gate, and, running in a straight line between the two hills just mentioned, falls into the Valley of the Son of Hinnom to the south-east, at the pool of Siloam. There is yet a fourth, though it is properly speaking only a large cleft in the eastern face of the hill of Zion; and a hot dispute still rages among antiquarians to which of the last two shall be assigned the name of the Valley of Tyropæon, or of the Cheesemongers, mentioned by Josephus.

I was at first disposed to believe that it must be the broad valley running between the two ranges of hills, but the language of Josephus in the following passage seems so clearly to intimate that it was the smaller which bore that name, that unless the hill of Zion extended much farther north than is generally believed, Dr Robinson's theory that the fourth of the ravines was the Tyropæon must be adopted as the correct one. The city was built upon two hills opposite to one another, with a valley in the midst between them, at which the rows of houses on both hills end. That hill on which the upper city is built is by much the highest of the two, and in length more direct. It was called the Citadel by king David, the father of that Solomon who built the first temple, but by us it is called the Upper Market-place. The other hill, called the Acra, on which the lower city is built, declines on both sides. Over against this stands a third hill, naturally lower than Acra, and which was formerly separated from the other by a broad valley, but which, in those times when the Asmoneans reigned, was filled up with earth, in order to join the city to the temple. They also then took off part of the height of Acra, and made it less than before, that the temple might overlook it. The valley called Tyropæon, which was that, as we said before, that divided the hill of the upper city from that of the lower, extended as far as Siloam, for so we call a fountain which sends out plenty of sweet water.<sup>1</sup> The ridges of Moriah and Zion run parallel to one another from north to south, and are subdivided into hills bearing different names. The southern part of the western ridge is the hill of Zion; the northern, separated from it only by the narrow cleft just mentioned, is called Akra. The middle portion of the eastern ridge is Mount Moriah, where the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. v. cap. 24.

temple stood ; the northern portion is called the hill of Bezétha, and the southern portion the hill of Ophel.

So much is necessary to understand the position of the Holy City, and the natural features of the country in the immediate vicinity of its walls. From the windows of my bedroom, which looked to the east, I had already been able to form some idea of the town. The magnificent dome of the Mosque of Sakhara rose full before me, and I had been able to convince myself that the Mount of Olives was much higher than at first sight, from the road, I had taken it to be ; but still I was anxious, before beginning to visit Jerusalem in detail, to have a correct idea of the position and general appearance of the whole city, and for this purpose, on the day after my arrival, rode with Miss Chesney and Messrs Nicolayson and Graham to the hill of Scopus, which lies to the north-east of the city ; a locality not only excellently adapted for the purpose I had in view, but possessing also a deep interest in itself, as the place from whence Titus, the Roman general, made his first inspection of Jerusalem before he invested it with his legions. After having repeatedly visited every spot in the neighbourhood from which a complete view of the city can be obtained, I have no hesitation in fixing on that from Scopus as by far the finest. There are others better for details—for example, the celebrated view from the southern shoulder of the Mount of Olives for the Great Mosque and the site of the ancient temple, and that given in the frontispiece of this volume for the two hills and intervening valley within the city—but from this point the whole city seems to rise with a gradual slope from the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the tower of Hippicus and the Armenian convent on the top of Zion, without any intervening valley. This is the view of Jerusalem which would present itself to the bulk of the Israelites as they came from the north to attend the sacred solemnities of the Holy City ; and as it was the place from whence Titus first saw it, so we are sure, from the localities named by the Prophet Isaiah in depicting their approach, that from it the proud Assyrian host first beheld that city which they found impregnable, because Jehovah himself was its bulwark. Most truly, in gazing at the city as it lay spread out upon the bosom of the hill before us, could we still adopt concerning it, shorn though it be of all its former magnificence, the language of the Psalmist : ‘ Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, *on* (or rather *from*) *the sides of the north*, the city of the Great King.’ Scopus is a continuation of the range of the Mount of Olives which lies nearly south from it, while still farther in that direction, with the village of Siloam excavated in its base, is

the Mount of Offence, so called from the idol temples which the wise Solomon built there for the heathen wives who had turned his heart from the God of his Fathers.

Having thus obtained a good idea of the position of the city, the next step in a systematic exploration of it was to walk round the modern walls, which are the work of Sultan Suliman, executed about 300 years ago. Mr Consul Finn and his excellent wife kindly volunteered to be my *ciceroni* on the first occasion; and preceded by the consular dragoman flourishing his silver-headed stick as the badge of his office, we accomplished the circuit leisurely in two hours. Passing again the tower of Hippicus, we issued from the city by the Yaffa gate, and turned to the north along the western wall. In some places there are traces of the ancient wall having once extended on this side farther to the west than the modern one, and there are also the foundations of what probably was one of the towers; but there is nothing remarkable till we reach the north-west angle. The ancient wall, instead of turning here to the east as the modern one does, has run along, as its foundations clearly show, a considerable distance to the NW., ending at the angle in a tower, which, no doubt, is the one Josephus calls the tower of Psephinus. This, as the highest ground without the city, seems to have been always selected as the camping-place of the warriors who came up against it. It was the position selected by Titus for his camp, and tradition places that of the Assyrians within a very short distance of it. This is the third or outer wall, the foundations of which were laid by Herod Agrippa, but afterwards discontinued, as he feared the dimensions of the work would give umbrage to his patrons at Rome; and it was only finished at a later period in a way far inferior to the original design. These foundations, as described by Josephus, were laid with immense stones, some of which can be distinctly traced among the olive trees to the north of the city. Continuing along the northern wall, we descended into the head of the valley which runs from north to south through the middle of the city. To the north of this, among the olive groves, Mr and Mrs Finn suppose that we should look for the site of Golgotha, an opinion which, on further acquaintance with the city, I was unable to share with them; but here in passing, it may be remarked, that though the Rev Mr Williams, chaplain to the former bishop, has published a very learned work with the avowed object of proving the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to be the true site of Golgotha, I did not meet with a single British resident in Jerusalem, lay or clerical, who holds that opinion.

In this part of the northern wall is the gate of Damascus, called by

the Arabs Bab el Amúd, the 'Gate of the Pillar.' In architectural character, the lower part of this gate is altogether different from the Saracenic structure which has been raised upon it. There are portions of the ancient wall still standing on either side of it, and a tower within the gate, built with bevelled stones like those at Hebron, and referable to the period of the kings of Judah. As the foundations to the north of this, mark without doubt the third or Agrippa's wall, the existence of a tower and a portion of an ancient wall here, taken in connection with other traces of it to be met with in one or two places between this and the Yaffa gate, goes far to prove that the second wall of Jerusalem, concerning the direction of which Josephus affords little information, followed pretty nearly the line of the modern walls. A few yards to the east of this gate there is a small tank cut out in the rock, but now in a state of dilapidation, which De Sauley has chosen to fix upon as the upper pool of Gihon, though it corresponds neither in size nor situation with the scriptural notices we have of that reservoir.

After passing the Damascus gate, the ground again rises on the other side of the valley, and we come to the upper part of the ridge which lower down is known as Bezétha and Mount Moriah, and which has here been cut down by artificial means to a considerable distance from the wall. This is indicated by a high ledge of rock to the north of our path, in which there is an extensive grotto, evidently made in quarrying building materials, now called Jeremiah's cave, where it is pretended he wrote the book of Lamentations; and by a corresponding grotto in the rock under the city wall, extending a long way into the hill of Bezétha, of which a more particular description will be given hereafter. Having surmounted this ridge, the road again descends towards the east, and between it and the wall a broad ditch, eight or ten feet deep, has been cut out of the solid rock all the way to the NE. angle, for the purpose of securing additional defence, as this must always have been one of its weakest points. In the eastern face of one of the towers on this part of the wall there is a small gate, now built up, to which Europeans give the name of Herod's Gate, and the natives Bab el Zahary.

Having reached the north-east angle, we now turn south, passing along by far the most interesting part of the walls. Beneath is the valley of Jehoshaphat, here an extensive oliveyard, every inch of which is sown with wheat. Beyond it is the Mount of Olives, the northern part of which is much more thickly planted with olives than the southern, which alone I had seen on my approach from Hebron. The de-

scent of the valley at this part is not so rapid as I had supposed. Through it the brook Kedron once ran; but now it is only for a day or two at most, in years when any extraordinary quantity of rain has fallen, that it is even known to run above the well of En Rogel, and even then it never takes its rise so high as in the part opposite the angle of the northern wall. It is now simply a drain for the redundant water in the rainy season; and though some of my friends in Jerusalem, who firmly believe the Kedron was in former days a perpetually running stream and will be so again when 'the set time to favour Zion' shall come, may consider me heterodox in my views, I am very strongly of opinion that in Jerusalem's palmiest days the wadi of the Kedron, like others farther south, saw its brook dry up as soon as the winter rains had passed away. As a part of the punishment threatened against disobedient Israel ran in these terms, 'Thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron' (Deut. xxviii. 23), it is highly probable that ere that punishment was inflicted rain fell more copiously at the appointed seasons of the early and latter rain than now, but still, as there is no perennial fountain by which it could be fed, the Kedron must have been dry during a great part of the year.<sup>1</sup> Between the city and the brow of the valley there is a strip of tolerably level ground running along the whole length of the eastern wall, which has been appropriated as a burying-ground by the Mohammedans, the southern portion of which, in particular, is most highly prized from its proximity to the sacred enclosure of the Great Mosque. In the midst of this region of tombs we passed a large pool of ancient workmanship, to which is now given the name of Birket Sitti Mariam, 'Pool of our Lady Mary,' from her tomb which it is pretended lies in the valley below.

The east gate is not far from this, and is known by three different names. The Europeans call it St Stephen's Gate; the native Christians, Bab Sitti Mariam, for the reason just stated; and the Mohammedans and Jews, Bab es Sabát, 'the Gate of the Tribes.' From hence the road to Bethany and Jericho descends into the bottom of the valley, and rises gently over the southern shoulder of the Mount of Olives. Another path, separating from this one nearly at right angles, leads up the face of the hill, and crosses it a little below the summit, but still to the south. The scene here presented to the eye is associated in every Christian's mind with some of his most solemn

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word invariably applied to Kedron is נַחַל *Nahal*, which signifies the winter torrent of a wadi.

and interesting meditations. It was the first place I visited in Jerusalem, having made my way here alone the morning after my arrival.

Along that road which winds round the shoulder of Olivet, strewed as for a gala day with branches from the palm tree, rode Zion's King, meek and lowly, upon an ass ; deaf to the shouts of the multitude, who rejoicing greatly, rent the heavens with their hosannas ; His eyes suffused with tears as He gazed on the beautiful city ; His thoughts intent on all the horrors and sufferings of the daughter of His people, when a trench should be cast about her, and the abomination that maketh desolate should stand in the holy place ; and the strong compassions of His loving heart finding vent in those affecting words, 'If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! but now they are hid from thine eyes.' That path which climbs the mountain brow is the shortest and most direct to Bethany. The Saviour took it often with His disciples ; and the last time He ever walked with them on earth they supposed He was leading them by the well known track to visit their friends in Bethany, when lo ! within sight of the village, 'while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.' Look again at those old gnarled olive trees which grow down below in the angle formed by the junction of these paths. The simplicity of the spot is marred by an ugly wall which the Latin monks have traced around it ; but they have not robbed it of its interest—that is the garden of Gethsemane. There the Saviour prayed, being in an agony, and sweat great drops of blood, in the prospect of the baptism which lay before Him. A more heart-moving scene than that outside St Stephen's Gate is not to be found about Jerusalem—of itself it amply repays all the toils of a journey thither. No harassing doubts arise as to the possibility of imposition, for the features of the country remain unchanged, and with one's Bible in hand, it is impossible not to recognise them. It has indeed been suggested that the spot now pointed out as Gethsemane, at the junction of two much frequented paths, could not be the place which the Saviour was likely to choose for retirement and prayer ; and there is considerable force in the objection ; but even if we give up that particular spot, it is with the certainty that on some other, within a few hundred yards of it, the wondrous scene of the Saviour's agony took place.

Some writers are exceedingly indignant at any one venturing to call in question the accuracy of the traditional spots pointed out ; but the reader will probably acknowledge there is need for some caution



in this matter, when he hears that, in common with others who visit Jerusalem, I had actually pointed out to me a broken pillar, embedded at the corner of the street near the Via Dolorosa, as the place where the beggar Lazarus lay, and a comparatively modern house hard by, built on arches across the street, as the habitation of Dives! This, and much similar stuff, is palmed off upon every fresh batch of pilgrims who arrive. The gate of St Stephen, at which in our perambulations we have arrived, affords another example of the need of caution in receiving the traditions of the monks. Dr Robinson, who has done admirable service in this respect, brings forward evidence which completely establishes the fact, that the site of Stephen's martyrdom was first fixed outside the Bab el Khalil; was afterwards changed to a place beyond the Damascus gate; and making the round of the walls, has at length been fixed outside the eastern gate! There is but one move now wanting to identify this name with every gate of the modern city. It has been held by some that the Bab Sitti Mariam is the ancient 'Fish Gate.' I suppose on the principle of *lucus a non lucendo*, as no fish came from the Dead Sea, and the natural place to look for it would be on the northern or western side of the city, to one of the gates in which, as the nearest, the fishermen of Joppa and the sea coast would naturally betake themselves.

Within a few score feet of this gate, the Harám or sacred enclosure of the mosque begins; and though the high wall prevented any view of the interior, it was a solemn thing to remember that, separated from us only by the thickness of a wall, was the place where, alone in all the earth for many ages, Jehovah manifested His presence by a cloud of glory—the place of which He had said, 'This is my rest for ever; here will I dwell, for I have desired it.'—Psalm cxxxii. 14. A considerable portion of the foundation and lower courses of the ancient wall can still be traced in the modern one. The stones are of large size, bevelled on their edges, evidently the work of Jewish hands. Many of them do not seem to have been ever moved from the position in which they were placed by Herod's, or, perhaps, even by Solomon's workmen; while others, built here and there into the wall among smaller stones, serve as proof that, when the walls were rebuilt, the ancient material lying at hand was used. Let no one fear, that by admitting the fact, that some of the courses of stone of the ancient wall are still in their original position here, we afford ground for calling in question the fulfilment of the Saviour's prediction concerning the Temple, 'Verily, I say unto you, there shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down' (Matt. xxiv. 2); for

these stones do not belong to the Temple building, but only to the enclosing wall, which, like the present one, was also the eastern wall of the city. Not only is it true that one stone does not rest on another where the temple once stood, and that its site has been ploughed up and turned to all manner of uses since, but the prediction has been fulfilled even with regard to the enclosing walls which are not specified in it; and for the few portions of the latter which still remain, we are probably indebted to the accumulation of ruins preventing the Roman soldiers from getting down to the very foundations. When they had laid this wall so low that men could make their way across the rubbish without obstruction, they would consider the work of destruction fully done.

About 400 feet from the Bab Sitti Mariam, proceeding southward along Mount Moriah, we came to a beautiful double gate of Roman architecture, now walled up with hewn stones, a very small slit being left in the middle of each for the double purpose of loop-hole and window. This gate, since the time of the Crusaders, has been known to Europeans by the name of the Golden Gate, and to the Mohammedans as the Bab esh Dhahariyah, 'the Gate of Glory.' They have a tradition that, on the day the Christians enter in at that gate, the mosque of Sakhara will be lost to them. In looking through the loopholes in the wall, we could distinguish that the gateway has not been blocked up within. The light coming from the interior enabled us to make out two rows of columns supporting the portico, the floor of which seemed to be below the level of the area of the Harám. With regard to its date, there is diversity of opinion; some supposing it belonged to Herod's temple, and others, that it belonged to the temple which Adrian built to Jupiter, on purpose to desecrate the Lord's house, and to avenge himself on the revolted Jews. The question is one on which some definitive settlement, one would suppose, might be arrived at by those who have made the styles and the changes of ancient architecture their study. Mr Catherwood is of opinion that it belongs to Herod's temple, because its pillars resemble those in the crypts of the mosque of Aksa. I expect that new and important information will soon be before the public with regard to every nook and corner of the Harám, as well as to many other localities in the neighbourhood, from the pen of Dr Barclay, an American medical missionary, who has been resident for a number of years at Jerusalem. He had the rare good fortune to be called in by the authorities to render assistance to a blundering Turkish architect, who had been sent from Constantinople to repair the sacred edifices, but

had forgotten a theodolite and other necessary instruments, which Dr Barclay possessed. Without disguise of any kind, or the discreditable pretexts by which others before him got admission, he had access at all times to the area of the temple, and was able, with perfect leisure, to make his observations and measurements.

In the wall of the Harám, besides these large ancient stones, there are many columns of granite and of rich marble to be found, which Suliman's workmen have pressed into their service. Most of these are laid horizontally in the direction of the wall, but one has been laid across, and projects several feet beyond it. This, the Mohammedans believe, will be occupied by Mohammed in the day of judgment, while our Lord will stand on the Mount of Olives.—the Valley of Jehoshaphat being the scene, according to them, of that solemn event. At the south-east angle of the Harám a portion of the ancient wall still stands to a considerable height, and some of the blocks composing it are of great size. They are all bevelled on the edge, and from sixteen to twenty feet is about their average size; but one I found on measurement to be 27 feet long, by 6 feet in height. Along the eastern wall of the temple enclosure ran a covered piazza known by the name of Solomon's Porch; and this angle of it, which overhangs the Kedron valley, was most probably the pinnacle of the temple from which Satan sought to persuade the Lord to throw Himself down. Josephus declares the height of the porch at this point to have been so great, that it made one giddy to look from it into the valley beneath. I have no doubt, if excavations could be made here, it would be found that his description is a faithful one; for the steep bank which now leads down to the valley has evidently been formed by the ruins and rubbish of the temple buildings, confirmation of which we have in the fact, that this bank is the place where the dealers in antiquities find most of the coins and other relics which are really genuine.

Nearly on a line with this angle of the wall, and a few feet above the bed of the Kedron, is the well-known monument called the Tomb of Absalom, hewn out of the rock, and beside it other three similarly constructed, but of different patterns, called the Tombs of Zacharias, of the Apostle James, and of Jehoshaphat. Below the southern wall of the Harám, running down to the Valley of Hinnom, where it ends in a rocky promontory, is the quarter which was called Ophel, a continuation of Mount Moriah, in which the Nethinim and other servants of the temple formerly resided. There is not a house to be seen on it now; it is covered with vineyards and fields of corn. The King's

Pool,' or, as it is now called, the Fountain of the Virgin, is in the eastern face of Ophel, within a few yards of the bottom of the Valley of Jehoshaphat; and opposite to it runs the Mount of Offence, with the hanging village of Siloam at its base, composed chiefly of ancient tombs cut in the rock, now converted by the Arabs into dwellings. Following the downward course of the valley, a piece of garden ground richly cultivated, and still watered from the pool of Siloam, lies at the junction of the two valleys, which in former days was known as the 'King's Gardens,' while a little below it is Ain Aoub, the Well of Joab, better known to the Scripture student as the well of En Rogel.

From the south-east angle of the wall we turned our faces to the west, keeping along its southern front. The old foundations are visible in several places; but nothing remarkable appears till we come to the Mosque of Aksa, which abuts upon the wall, and an entrance to which, from the country, seems once to have been afforded by a double arched gate of Roman architecture now walled up. An outer building connected with the western side of the mosque, projects considerably to the south of the line of wall. At the angle of junction a still more ancient gate, which once led into the city, was discovered some years ago by a Mr Tipping, whose name it now usually bears among Europeans; one half of which is within, and the other half without, this adjunct of the mosque. Beyond this the path descends into the valley of the Tyropæon, from which a fine view of the southern part of the Hill of Zion is obtained. With the exception of some buildings near its summit, the hill presents the appearance of a vast field waving with corn; the part declining towards the valley of the Son of Hinnom being planted with olive trees. No one, from its present appearance, would ever guess that a large portion of the ancient city once stood upon it, so literally is the prophecy fulfilled, 'Zion shall be ploughed like a field.'—Jeremiah xxvi. 18.

One of the modern gates, supposed, from its vicinity to Hinnom, to have been the Dung Gate of ancient days, stands in this quarter, called Bab el Mugháribeh, 'the Gate of the Western Africans.' For a number of years it had been closed, but had been opened again the year before my visit to El Khuds owing to a scarcity of water, and its being the shortest way to the well of En Rogel, whence the city was supplied; and often, in passing afterwards, I observed that it was more used by the villagers coming to the bazaars than any of the others. A high well-built wall of hewn stone, attributed to the later times of the Romans, runs from this gate up the hill of Zion, which is here very steep, and thickly strewed with little squares of lime-stone,

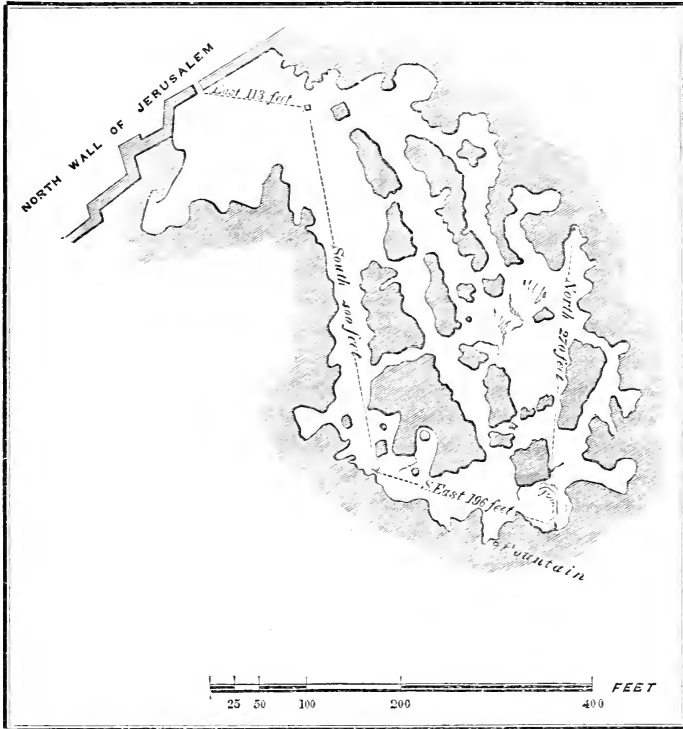
which had served as *tesserae* for pavements. Nearly at the top of the hill is the Bab el Nebi Daoud, or 'Gate of David.' About a hundred yards south of it, towards the declivity of the hill, there is a mosque of large dimensions, which is said, with every probability of truth, to cover the tomb of David; and close beside it is a building, now turned into an Armenian Convent, bearing in Arabic the name of Habs el Messih—'the Prison of Messiah'—which is said to occupy the site of the Palace of Caiaphas, where Jesus was condemned. Beyond this are the cemeteries belonging to the different Christian communities, viz., Armenian, Greek, Latin, and American, while, still lower down the hill to the west is the English one. In passing the Latin burying-ground, Mr Finn drew my attention to a gravestone placed in the very wall by the road side, which marks the last resting-place of a young Swiss Protestant, who died in the Latin Convent some years ago. As he refused to renounce his religion in his dying moments, the tender-hearted fathers buried him like a dog in the middle of the path we were standing on. His body was here torn by the jackals and dogs; and when the Protestant missionaries raised an indignant protest against such barbarity, and got the authorities to compel the Latins to give it decent burial, to avoid contaminating consecrated ground they took down a portion of the wall, dug the grave there, and then rebuilt the wall, covering the larger portion of the tombstone! In addition to their ancient cemetery around the pillar of Absalom, the Jews have obtained a new one in this quarter. A steep descent brought us down the western side of Zion into the upper part of the Valley of Hinnom, where, between the upper and lower pools of Gihon, Isaiah places the Fuller's Field, and from thence, passing the citadel once more, we re-entered the town by the Yaffa Gate. The walls vary in height from twenty to fifty feet; they are surmounted by a battlement, and flanked by towers at intervals along their course. A path runs along the top of the wall inside, by which one can make a circuit of the greater part of the city, obtaining an excellent view both of it and of the country around—a benefit of which the traveller should frequently avail himself.

In connection with the walls of the town, this is the fitting place to refer to one of the most interesting incidents of my *sejour* at Jerusalem. Mr Graham had been invited to be one of a party to explore a subterranean passage discovered by Dr Barclay but a few days before my arrival, which it was whispered led to the very foundations of Solomon's Temple, and he kindly promised that I should be included whenever the day was fixed. The most perfect secrecy, however, was enjoined

in the meantime, as, if it came to the ears of the Turkish authorities or of the fellahin that such a discovery had been made by the Franks, effectual means would be taken to prevent all access. The first Friday after my arrival was the day fixed on for the visit, as that being the Mohammedan Sabbath, the gates of Jerusalem are strictly closed for two hours, from eleven to one o'clock, and no stragglers are then found without the walls. A few minutes before eleven, having dropped out separately to avoid suspicion, a party, consisting of Dr Sim and Mr Calman (members of the Jewish Mission), Mr Graham, and myself, each provided with a wax candle, mustered outside the Yaffa Gate, under the leadership of Dr Barclay's youngest son, who had been with his father when the cave was first discovered. Arrived at the Damascus gate, we found it still open, and were obliged to hide ourselves among the tombs in a large Mohammedan cemetery behind the grotto of Jeremiah, lest we should be perceived by the sentinel or some straggler on the wall, until the Muezzin had called the faithful to prayer. At last Mr Barclay made a dash down to the wall about 100 yards east of the Damascus gate, and, to my surprise, flinging himself on his breast, wormed his body, head foremost, into a hole in the foundations not more than a foot and a half in height or width. It was, in fact, a hole made by jackals, which Dr Barclay's dog had discovered when in pursuit of one of these animals. It extended eight feet under the wall, and at the farther end there was a wall six feet deep to descend, a perilous and awkward conclusion for one arriving head foremost; indeed I never was nearer having an attack of apoplexy than in endeavouring, in a niche at the farther end, some two feet and a half wide, to turn my body so as to get my legs out first. One of the party who followed could not perform this feat, and was obliged to go back and enter feet foremost, when the descent was easily accomplished. Had our entrance been observed, and this hole blocked up, our situation would have been an alarming one, as there was no other mode of egress.

Lights being struck, we found ourselves in what seemed a capacious but low-roofed cave, the bottom of which was filled to a great depth with mounds of rubbish. As we advanced, however, the cave descended rapidly, and the roof attained a height varying from twenty to forty feet. The accompanying plan, for which I am indebted to Dr Barclay, who measured it carefully, will show its size and direction. At first we proceeded eastward 113 feet, then directly south 400 feet; the direction of the cave then turned to the south-east for 196 feet, where it ended in a deep circular pit, from whence, after turning northwards

270 feet, we arrived at a chamber where much of the stone and a quantity of soil had fallen in, evidencing a near approach to the surface, and where probably there may have been an entrance in former times. Indeed, we were inclined to think that the stones and soil had been purposely cast in to obliterate all traces of the cave from without, and to prevent an enemy from penetrating by it into the town. We had not been long in it before we found that it



was not a natural cave, but an immense quarry beneath a portion of the city, from which stone for building it had been excavated without disturbing the surface. The marks of the chisel in the white calcareous rock were perfectly fresh, and some of the blocks still remain, cut into shape, but not broken off. Along the rocky walls at the side the mode of operation is distinctly traceable. Deep narrow grooves or channels have been cut lengthwise between the blocks, which have been of immense size; and then they have been forcibly

torn from the rock by some mechanical process, not improbably by inserting wooden blocks or wedges in the cuttings, and saturating them with water, till the swelling fibres burst the rock asunder. The carefully cut grooves, with the riven surface of the rock between them, may be traced for a considerable length along the western side. There are some magnificent halls formed in this manner, pillars of the natural rock being left around them to support the roof, while innumerable chambers and recesses stretch away both to the right and left, showing that the rock has been worked wherever it was found best in quality. The mounds, of what at first we took for rubbish, are formed of the chips and cuttings of the rock in quarrying and dressing the stones before they were removed. After penetrating to a distance of 250 yards, into the very heart of the hill Bezétha, we came to the circular hall or pit already mentioned; and in the southernmost recess, about fifty feet from it, found a fountain, the water of which was slightly brackish. In its bed were some fragments of earthen jars, from which the workmen quenched their thirst, perhaps so long ago as when they quarried for the Palace or the Temple of Solomon.

To Dr Barclay we are thus indebted for one of the most interesting discoveries made in Jerusalem in modern times; for there is strong probability that this is the place from whence the stones were hewn for the Temple: first, on account of the immense size of the blocks and their correspondence with those still standing at the south-east angle of the Harám, and in its western substructions at the Jews' Wailing Place; secondly, from the nature of the stone; and thirdly, from the unequivocal evidence to be found in the quarry that the stones were dressed there, which we know was the case with those used in building the Temple. From hence they would probably be moved on rollers down the Tyropæon valley to the very side of the Temple. Multitudes of white bats were clinging to the roof of the chambers; and we had evidence in the human skeletons and bones of other animals, that the jackals, and possibly hyænas also, are in the habit of holding here high carnival without fear of interruption. It took three hours to explore the cave fully. With clothes covered with mud, and faces begrimed with perspiration and smoke, we looked like a squad of miners as we entered the Damascus gate, where our appearance evidently excited the suspicions of the sentry, who seemed on the point of calling out the guard; but luckily his wrath evaporated in curses, which did us no harm, and we succeeded in reaching our various quarters without molestation.

Within the walls of Jerusalem there are few monuments of antiquity



to be seen—meaning by that expression such as reach back to the Jewish age. This is not wonderful, if it be borne in mind that it has been subject to greater vicissitudes than perhaps any other city on the face of the earth; and that it is now trodden down of Gentiles, who are not only themselves despisers of all antiquarian lore, but jealous to fanaticism of all who manifest a leaning towards it. As an example: Dr Barclay having learned that within the memory of men still living, traces of the piers that supported Solomon's Causeway or viaduct were visible in the Tyropæon valley, opposite the ruined arch discovered by Dr Robinson, to which reference will be made hereafter, engaged an Arab to make excavations for him at the foot of Mount Zion; but though the time for operations was fixed, and the remuneration stipulated, the man drew back on three different occasions through fear of being discovered and maltreated in consequence. That Jerusalem abounds with interesting relics of its most prosperous days, which would set at rest the disputes of archaeologists and topographers, I have not a doubt; but they are all buried deep below the present surface, into which neither Jew nor Christian dare drive spade or pickaxe, until there be a radical change in the country's rulers and form of government. This interment might be anticipated, reasoning theoretically, by any one who bears in mind that, in addition to a partial destruction of its walls by the combined attack of the Kings of Israel and Syria, Jerusalem was entirely laid in ruins by Nebuchadnezzar and Titus, and very nearly so by Antiochus Epiphanes and Herod; that it suffered great injury by siege from Pompey, Adrian, and the later Persians under the victorious Chosroes II.; so that, without reckoning dilapidation and ruin which accrued to it at still later periods of its history, when Saracen and Crusader alternately became its masters, it is no great exaggeration to say that seven distinct cities have been raised on the ruins of one another, and that consequently the remains of the earliest and most interesting, with one or two exceptions, must be sought for below the present surface.

What thus suggests itself in theory to every reflective mind, I had several opportunities of verifying very strikingly as the fact. The first instance I met with of the great change which the overthrow of buildings and subsequent accumulation of filth and rubbish have produced on the surface of the city, was in a building of comparatively moderate date. Dr Macgown, the much-esteemed physician attached to the English-Jewish Mission, took me to visit the Greek Church of St John, situated exactly opposite the hotel in which I lodged, on a portion of the ground formerly occupied by the hospital of the knights

of that order, the greater part of which, at the time of my visit, was converted into a field of waving corn. The modern church had nothing to show worth mentioning, except a carved wooden screen before the altar, and a pulpit, likewise carved, the gifts of the Emperor of Russia, and a portion of St John the Baptist's skull, preserved in a silver casket. After visiting the modern church, we descended into an ancient church, at the depth of 25 feet below the convent court, which is on the same level with the street. One is apt at the first glance to conclude, that this must have been merely a vault or crypt belonging to a former church, which has been supplanted by the modern one; but further inspection proves that it was the church of the hospital at the time of the Crusades, and that the 25 feet of soil now above it is the rubbish which has accumulated since then; because, in the gable walls, as well as in that facing the door by which we entered, the windows still remain, by which the light of heaven was formerly admitted into the edifice. It was with a view to point out how great a change has taken place upon the surface of the city that the Doctor conducted me thither. If the level of the surface has been raised by 25 feet since the time of the Crusaders, a much greater change of surface must have resulted from the more complete destruction to which, on previous occasions, the city was subjected. Another convincing proof of this came under my observation a day or two after my arrival. Wandering down from the bazaars towards the Harám, to get as near a view as possible of the interior, in an out-of-the-way street in the valley of the Tyropæon, I came upon a trench, cut for the foundation of a new house to the depth of 35 or 40 feet, the bottom of which was intersected by old walls, and other remnants of ancient building. Other instances might be adduced,—as, for example, the difficulty which was experienced in getting a firm foundation for the English Church until those employed had dug to a great depth; but those already given will suffice to account for the few really ancient monuments to be found now in Jerusalem, and will at the same time show, that the theories propounded by rival antiquaries with regard to the sites of former edifices, and the course taken by the walls, must be to a great extent guesses in the dark.

Before proceeding to examine the relics of the olden time which yet remain, the reader will perhaps accompany me, as once before at Suez, to the flat roof of Hauser's Hotel, and take a bird's-eye view of the city. It is divided into four Harts or quarters. The Hart Arman, or Armenian quarter, occupies the western part of Zion; the

Hart el Yahoud, or Jewish quarter, the eastern part of Zion; the Hart en Nazrané, or Christian quarter, the north-west portion of Akra; and the Hart el Musilmen extends over all the rest of the city. The first thing that strikes the eye on looking over the city, is the curious construction of the roofs of the houses, each of which has a dome rising from its flat surface, some having two or three; the next is, that in accordance with the ancient custom of the country, founded on an express injunction of the law of Moses (Deut. xxii. 8), the roofs are provided with parapets to prevent accidents; and, finally, that as the house-top is still used as a place of general resort in hot weather, provision has been made at once for the privacy and the curiosity of the hareéms. These parapets are constructed, for a space varying from six to twelve feet, with tiers of small earthenware pipes, such as we use in tile draining, through which the fair dames can look abroad without the danger of being seen. Let it be understood that Hauser's house stands on the eastern slope of the hill Akra, which is a continuation in a northerly direction of Mount Zion; and now let us look first to the west. Immediately below the house is the pool of Hezekiah, a large reservoir, now filled with yellow muddy water, to which we shall soon refer again. Beyond it, on the hill side, rise the houses of the modern town, prominent among which are the Coptic and Latin convents. Farther back, a little to the south of the pool, stands the modern citadel, at the north-east angle of which is the tower of Hippicus, or of David, as it is often called; one of the towers of the ancient wall which was preserved by Titus as a military trophy, to show the strength of the city which he had subdued. Looking south, we have before us, covered with modern buildings, the northern face of the hill of Zion, which rises abruptly from the narrow ravine already spoken of as separating Zion from Akra. Along the edge of this ravine, it is probable, from the description of Josephus, that the innermost wall ran, which encircled the city of David, though no trace of it is to be discovered now above ground. On turning to the north, the most prominent object is the church of the Holy Sepulchre; a stately and venerable pile with large cloisters, campanile, and dome. The latter is falling to pieces for want of repairs, while the Greeks and Latins dispute among themselves which of the rival churches has the right to effect them. It was, indeed, this most profoundly interesting and momentous question that originated the late war between Russia and Turkey, which has caused such an expenditure of blood and money. Beyond the church the ground still continues to rise towards the north, covered with modern houses until the wall is reached. The view to

the east, however, is the principal one from this, as from all the other houses on Zion or Akra. Immediately beneath the house is a street running north and south, which leads to the church of the Sepulchre. On the other side of it is the Greek convent of St John, already spoken of, and the adjoining baths, both of which stand on ground once occupied by the hospital of the Knights of St John of Jerusalem. Judging from the amount of ground covered, it must have been a most extensive establishment. Beyond this, the eye rests on a confused mass of buildings in a hollow, constituting the Mohammedan quarter; on the other side of which, the magnificent Kubbet es Sakhara, or Dome of the Rock, rises on the hill of Moriah, a perfect gem both in its architecture and symmetry. Beside it to the south is the Church of Justinian, now known as the Mosque of Aksa, and several other smaller buildings, one of which is the Mosque of Omar. Looking northward from the Mosque of Sakhara the hill of Bezétha is seen, covered with modern buildings. It is considerably higher than Mount Moriah. The back-ground of this picture to the east is the Mount of Olives, which appears so close to the city, that the great mosque seems to rise directly from its base. It is crowned by a mosque, which was once a Christian church, built on the spot reputed in defiance of the Scripture Narrative, to be that of our Lord's ascension.

In visiting the antiquities within the city, it is well to begin at the Yaffa Gate; and the first object of interest is the tower of Hippicus, which now forms part of the modern citadel. It is perfectly solid within, and is built to the height of 40 feet with large square bevelled stones; the upper part of the tower is evidently modern, and corresponds in structure with the rest of the citadel. From the description given by Josephus of the tower which Herod built, and called Hippicus after one of his friends who had fallen in battle, there is every probability that it still survives in this ancient tower of the citadel. The establishment of the fact, however, upon undoubted evidence would be a matter of great importance to those who are waging *the battle of walls*; because Josephus states that the 'old wall' and 'the third wall,' or the innermost and outermost, both began from this tower; and it is by the determination of their course that the question must be solved, whether the place now occupied by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre was without or within the walls at the time of our Lord's crucifixion.

The next relic of Jewish times is only a few hundred yards from the tower of Hippicus, on the left hand as we descend to the Bazaars from the Yaffa Gate. It is a large pool for supplying the town with

water, now called by the natives Birket el Hummam, from the baths in its vicinity, and by Europeans the Pool of Hezekiah, from its agreement with the position of that reservoir as given in Scripture. The description is so precise, that one would suppose it impossible any dispute could have arisen with regard to it. In specifying the acts of Hezekiah, it is said, 'This same Hezekiah also stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and *brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David.*'—2 Chron. xxxii. 30. The upper pool of Gihon, as we shall afterwards see, lies to the west of the city, at the head of the valley of the Son of Hinnom, and the water-course originally led thence by a rapid descent in a south-easterly direction to the lower pool, which lies farther down the same valley, where the road to Bethlehem crosses it. From thence the water was probably taken by an aqueduct along the shoulder of the Hill of Zion to the temple, following the same direction which the modern aqueduct does. But for the greater convenience of the city, as well as to prevent the supply of water from being cut off by a hostile army (such as the Assyrian, which encamped in the neighbourhood), he made a pool within the walls, and brought the water into it by a conduit from the upper pool of Gihon. That conduit remains to the present day, connecting the Birket Mamilla with Hezekiah's reservoir, and answers in every respect the description given of it as '*brought straight down to the west side of the city of David.*' Isaiah speaks of this as '*a ditch between the two walls*' (Isaiah xxii. 11), thus affording a strong ground of inference that the second wall of the city ran outside the Birket el Hummam, following pretty nearly the direction of the modern wall. Mr Williams, who contends earnestly for the Church of the Sepulchre as the true site of Calvary, and of the new tomb wherein our Lord lay, ridicules, as a monkish tradition of very modern fabrication, the idea of Birket el Hummam being the Pool of Hezekiah, and attempts to identify it with the Pool of Siloam, while he places the upper pool beyond the northern wall of the city. How he makes this agree with the words of Scripture already quoted it is not easy to comprehend, even though he takes the liberty of making Ophel do duty for the City of David. He lays much stress upon that passage in 2 Kings xxv. 4, where King Zedekiah is described as flying by night '*by the way of the gate between two walls, which is by the king's garden,*' forgetting apparently that Josephus describes a double wall in the neighbourhood of Hippicus, as well as to the south of the temple. Hauser's hotel is built on the eastern edge of this pool, and every window to the back of the house commands an excellent view of it; yet I prefer the

view from the windows of Mr Bergheim's Bank, as affording a more exact idea of its size. Dr Robinson gives its measurement at 240 feet in length by 144 in breadth. It is apparently about twenty feet deep; and, as it rained continuously during my stay, I had the advantage of seeing it always full. The conduit which brings the water from Gihon falls into it at the south-west corner.

Descending now a steep ill-paved street, having the Hill of Zion on the right, and the high arches which sustained the platform of the Hospital of St John on the left, we come to the Bazaars, which are very inferior to those of Cairo; and, passing through one corner of them, continue our descent along a street leading to the Mekhémeh or Court of Justice, and to the Bab es Salsála, one of the principal gates of the Harám, until we get into the valley which runs right through the city from the Damascus gate to the Bab el Mugháribeh. The first time I descended this street, being alone, and not knowing where it led to, I walked straight forward until I found myself standing within the gate of the Harám, where, as no one was near, I made the best use of my eyes in surveying the enclosure, until a boy, apparently about twelve years old, issued from one of the neighbouring courts, and, seeing an infidel in such a situation, began to shout out fiercely, *Harám, Harám! Ruch, Ruch!* 'Be off, be off!' Knowing that the black savages who act as porters are in the habit of beating unmercifully any strangers who may be found within the forbidden precincts, and having also read a printed warning in the Consulate, that those who exposed themselves to such treatment could hope for no redress, I took the hint before his cries should arouse the attention of these fanatics. But I do not propose to lead the reader into such a dangerous vicinity. A path leads down the valley just spoken of, which, to the south of this street, is acknowledged, by common consent of the disputing parties, to be part of the Tyropæon. By following it for a while, and then passing through a quarter filled with mean single-storied dwellings, we reach the Jews' wailing-place. It is a narrow court or passage adjoining the western wall of the Harám, which has been lately paved by a Jew for the benefit of his brethren, and is one of the most interesting places in the city. No one can look at the immense blocks of stone in that wall, without being convinced that he has before him, in its original state, a portion of the temple enclosure. On this side, it appears from the statements of Josephus, that the platform on which the temple buildings were erected was artificially enlarged by a wall built up from the Tyropæon valley, and filled in with earth. That this is a part of that retaining wall was confirmed, if

confirmation had been necessary, by the information given me both by Drs Macgown and Barclay, who had examined it from the interior. that it does not rise above the level of the ground within. It is from thirty to forty feet in height, built with large stones, some of which are nearly twenty feet in length. The Jews have purchased from the Government the privilege of resorting to this place; and, on every Friday, many of both sexes are to be seen sitting in the court reading the Scriptures, or their prayer books, and weeping over the ruin of their temple and nation. Some of them rock their bodies about, rattling over their prayers the while, with a tremendous rapidity. Others go up to the wall, and putting their mouths to the openings between the stones, pray in that attitude, because they imagine that their prayers are more sure to reach Jehovah's ear when breathed through the foundation walls of what was once His holy and beautiful house. It is a most touching sight to see these mourners weeping over the fallen Jerusalem. Alas! the veil is on their hearts still: they mourn not for Him whom they have pierced.

At the northern end of the Jews' Wailing Place is the Mekhémeh, or Cadi's Court, occupying probably the site of the House of Records in the days of the kings of Judah. Through the kindness of Dr Macgown, I got admission into it, but not while the court was sitting. It is a hall of large dimensions, presenting a fine specimen of Saracenic architecture; but otherwise there is nothing in the interior to interest one, except a large marble sarcophagus, beautifully ornamented with sculpture, which now serves as a water trough. From its resemblance to the fragment now in the museum at the Consulate, it is probable that this has been taken from the tombs of the kings to the north of the city. A large portal or bow-window looks out upon the Harám; and it was to obtain a near view of its buildings and fountains that Dr Macgown took me thither.

At the southern end of the Wailing Place stands the house of the Sheikh el Harám, which appears, from the outside, to be built up against the ancient wall, but is in reality intersected by it, as I heard from Drs Macgown, Sim, and Barclay, who had all frequently visited in it professionally. Close to this house, my attention was directed to an ancient gate, now walled up, which formerly led from the Tyropæon into the Temple. One half of the arch is without the Sheikh's house to the north, the other is within the edifice. The stones of which this gate is constructed are fashioned in the same manner, and appear as ancient as those in the adjoining wall. The merit of this discovery belongs to Dr Barclay: and as it is the only gate which has

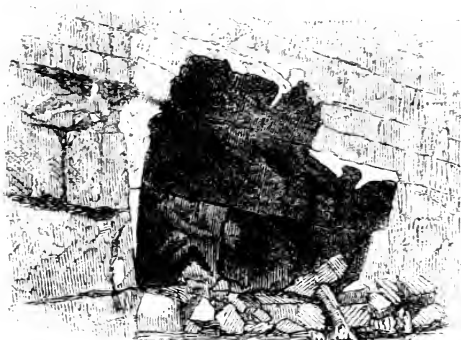
yet been found in the western boundary wall, it is one of great importance. Josephus tells us that 'in the western quarters of the enclosure of the Temple there were four gates. The first led to the king's palace and went to a passage over the valley. Two more led to the suburbs of the city; and the last led to the other city, where the road descended down into the valley by a great number of steps, and thence up again by the ascent.'<sup>1</sup> There cannot be a doubt that this is one of the four gates mentioned by Josephus in the passage just quoted; and from its position in the wall of embankment, which must have necessitated a descent from the Temple court by stairs, and its opening upon the valley of the Tyropæon, it is probably one of those which led to the suburbs. It is scarcely conceivable by those not on the spot, nor every day beset by the adverse theories respecting the relative situation of Zion, Akra, and Bezétha, what an itching desire creeps over one to seize pick and spade in the neighbourhood of some of these ruins, and to arrive at some certainty by burrowing in the earth. The fanatical spirit, however, is still too strong among the Mohammedans of Jerusalem to allow the detested *giaour* to take such a liberty, otherwise there is open space very near the Sheikh's house, the excavation of which would bring to light much that is both interesting and important.

On the south side of the Sheikh's house, the ancient embanking wall still continues; but to get at it, it is necessary to retrace our steps through the narrow devious lanes by which we approached, till we fall again into the path that leads down to the Bab el Mugháribeh, through plantations of prickly pears (*ficus indicus*). Making our way through them, we get into an open plot of ground sown with corn, which comes up again to the ancient wall. The object of particular interest is the spring of an arch jutting out from the wall, and formed with stones of the same cyclopean size. To Dr Robinson we are indebted not only for the discovery of it, but for first directing attention to the purpose which it served. According to his measurements, this ancient arch is 51 feet in width along the wall. Three courses of stones remain, each on an average about five feet in thickness. There is one monster stone in it 24 feet in length, which engages the attention and measuring operations of every stranger who approaches the spot. The arch to which these belonged must at one time have spanned the Tyropæon valley, joining Zion to the Temple Mount; and there can be little doubt that Dr Robinson's conjecture is the right one, that

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant., Lib. xv., cap. ii.



this was the famous approach which Solomon made from his palace in the city of David to the Temple; though his antagonist, Mr Williams, insists that it was a *causeway* and not an arched viaduct, and would have us accept as such the street running from the bazaars to the western gate of the Harám, by which the reader has descended in our company to the Wailing Place. The only notice which we have of this work of Solomon in Scripture, is in connection with the Queen of Sheba's visit. We are told that after having witnessed the display of his magnificence in various ways, and among others, in 'his ascent by which he went up into the house of the Lord, there was no more spirit in her.' If this ascent was by means of a viaduct raised on arches similar to the one of which a fragment still remains, we can well understand how her spirit should sink within her, as even in the present day



it would be reckoned a stupendous work; but if it was nothing more than a bank of earth filling up the valley, she must have been a woman of poor spirit indeed to have lost all self-possession at so ordinary an undertaking. Opposite this arch the hill of Zion rises precipitously from the valley; and it was at its base, in a line with the ruined arch, that Dr Barclay proposed to make an excavation in search of the other piers, when he was foiled, as already mentioned, by the timidity of the Arab he employed.

Turning now to the north, and crossing again the raised street, along which it has been ascertained that the aqueduct, conveying water from the Pools of Solomon, is carried, we find not far to the north of it, and close to the enclosure of the Harám, a bathing establishment called Hummam esh Shefa, 'the baths of health,' underneath which there is a well sixty feet below ground, from which water for the baths is supplied at the present day. Whether this be a fountain of living

water or merely an opening into an aqueduct tunnelled through Mount Moriah, for the supply of the Temple services, has not yet been ascertained. The waters are intermittent in their flow, like those of Siloam and the Pool of the Virgin; and from that circumstance, as well as from a statement to that effect made by one of the men connected with the baths, Dr Robinson supposes that there is a connection between them—a supposition all the more likely from his having discovered a channel connecting the last two together. This is a question which still invites a solution at the hands of some intrepid archæologist, who has no objection to be slung with a rope and lowered full eighty feet (for the mouth of the well is about twenty feet above the level of the ground) by a set of fellows who might probably think they did God service, by allowing the law of gravitation to take its course unchecked. Dr Robinson brought ropes, but failed in getting permission to descend. Mr Walcott, another American gentleman, actually descended and made his way along a passage for eighty feet, when he met with another well which barred his progress; but as he had injured his compass, it still remains uncertain what direction he took, and the well has not been satisfactorily explored. Dr Barclay also made the attempt, and very nearly paid the forfeit of his life, as several of the cords of the rope gave way under the strain, and it was an arduous task to get him to the top again. The impression made on him by the situation in which he was placed had prevented him from renewing the attempt up to the time of my departure; but he was resolved to do so before he left the city a month or two later, and if he succeeded, we shall learn the results from his forthcoming volume. For my own part, though I trust no craven at heart, I am not ashamed to confess that, having heard from the doctor of his perilous adventure before my visit to the well, I considered it better to repress my archaeological curiosity.

The only remaining *antique* possessing Jewish features is a deep ditch just inside the eastern gate Bab Sitti Mariam, which is cut along the northern wall of the Harám, imparting to it a height nearly double that of the other walls which surround the Mosque. It is called by the natives *Birket Isráil*, and, by the monks, the Pool of Bethesda. Its measurement is 360 feet in length, 130 feet in breadth, and 75 feet in depth. It has been originally cut out of the solid rock, which in some places remains still uncovered, though in others it has been lined with stone and cement. At the western end there are two wide and lofty arches, which, though in great measure filled up with rubbish, have been ascertained to extend at least 100 feet farther west than the

pool, thus making it and its appendages about equal in length to the half of the northern enclosure of the Harám. Dr Robinson rejects the idea that this is the pool of Bethesda mentioned in the Gospel of St John, and supposes it to be the deep fosse which was cut along the northern side of the temple enclosure, and separated the tower of Antonia at its north-west corner from the hill of Bezétha. Looking at the shape and position of this pool, and bearing in mind what Josephus has told us of the works just referred to, I think no unprejudiced person, who believes that the present northern wall follows the line of the more ancient one belonging to the temple enclosure, can hesitate to agree with him that this is a part of the fosse; but I cannot see why this should prevent us from looking for the Pool of Bethesda either in the Birket Isráil or somewhere in its vicinity. The description given of it by St John leaves no doubt that it was within the walls of the city.—John v. 2. Ἔστι δε ἐν τοῖς Ἱεροσολυμοῖς κ. τ. λ. There is a tradition that a pool once existed in front of the ruined church of St Anne, on the opposite side of the street; but as the appearance of the ground does not seem to bear out that fact, I should not look for Bethesda there.

The Birket Isráil bears incontestable internal evidence of having been in remote times used as a reservoir for water, the inner course of stone being probably not of later workmanship than the time of Herod. Admitting it, then, to be 'the deep ditch' which Josephus describes, the measurements taken by Professor Robinson show that, even including the arches, it does not exceed *half* the extent of the northern wall of the Harám enclosure, whereas the ditch mentioned by the Jewish historian not only extended along *the whole* northern wall of the temple, but also along the Tower of Antonia at its north-west angle, so that the Birket Isráil is only a portion of the ditch, and we must look for the rest to the west of the arches. Now, we have the evidence of Josephus that there was a pool of water opposite the castle of Antonia; for, in describing the siege of Titus, he tells us that 'one of the great banks was raised at the tower of Antonia by the fifth legion, over against the middle of the pool which was called Struthius.'<sup>1</sup> In our Lord's time, therefore, there must have been in this part of Jerusalem either one immense reservoir, 75 feet in breadth and nearly 1000 feet in length, or two separate pools, with an access to the temple between. The latter seems the more probable from the description which Josephus elsewhere gives of the soldiers of Cestius

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. v. cap. 2.

coming up without encountering any other obstacle than the darts of the besieged to the northern wall of the temple, and preparing to set fire to the gate.<sup>1</sup> Eusebius and Jerome also, in the *Onomasticon* under the word *Bethesda*, speak of twin lakes, one filled with rain-water, which was *Bethesda*, the other with water of a red colour, as though tinged with the blood of the sacrifices that used to be washed there, on which account it was called the sheep pool.<sup>2</sup> It is generally believed that the sheep-gate was on the north of the temple, and if that could be established beyond a doubt, it would decide the matter at once in favour either of the *Birket Isráil* or the *Struthius*, which lay beyond it. In the absence of unquestionable evidence to that fact, either from Scripture or the Jewish historian, it was a great satisfaction to have the accuracy of the statements made by Josephus, Eusebius, and Jerome concerning these two pools confirmed by information I received from Mr Hodge, one of the missionaries of the London Jewish Society, residing in Jerusalem. Very early one summer morning, in strolling along the street leading to the *Bab Sitti Mariam*, he turned up a dark vaulted passage to the east of the governor's house, which leads to one of the gates of the *Harám*. Seeing an open door to the right hand he looked into it, and, to his surprise, discovered, in the garden or open space within, a large birket, in great measure choked up with earth and rubbish. Though he was on forbidden ground, and ran considerable risk, he was about to advance to examine it, when a man from within rushed forward with the usual menacing cry, 'Harám, Harám,' and prevented his advance. Being perfectly master of the Arabic language, however, he began to converse with him, and soon learned that he was correct in supposing it was a birket which he had seen within. He then asked the name of the gate, and was told by his informant that it was 'the Sheep Gate.' Whether, therefore, *Birket Isráil* or the other, which is doubtless the *Struthius* of Josephus, be fixed on as *Bethesda*, the name of Sheep Gate, applied by the Arabs still to the gate between them which leads into the Mosque enclosure, must be held as decisive that one or other is the Scripture locality until stronger evidence to the contrary than any yet adduced shall be brought forward.

Among the more modern objects of interest in Jerusalem, the first on account of the site it claims to occupy, is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. During the first days after my arrival I made several

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. ii. cap. 19.

<sup>2</sup> Reland. *Palest.* p. 856. They read the passage in John v. 2 thus: 'now there is in Jerusalem by the sheep-pool a pool,' etc. etc.

attempts to get admission, but always found the door locked, and the piazza in front of it deserted. Resolved at last to get in, I summoned Hauser to my aid, and found that it was a matter of greater difficulty than I had imagined, as certain formalities are required to be observed. I had to send a messenger to the Latin Patriarch, requesting permission to enter, whereupon the messenger was sent to announce this application to the Greek Patriarch. About an hour after, each sent his dragoman to see the door opened; and that not because they were fearful that some outrage might be committed by a Protestant heretic, but because the jealousy and hatred existing between the rival sects had reached such a pitch that the Porte had been obliged to interfere, and appoint a Mussulman to keep the keys. What a bitter satire upon the Christian religion! In the presence of these two functionaries, the key-keeper having been summoned, mounted a ladder placed against the door, and, having unlocked an unwieldy padlock near the top, opened two other locks farther down, and thus gave us entrance to what is pompously called 'the Centre of the World.' While waiting for the accomplishment of these formalities, I had ample time, as on many other occasions, to examine the exterior fabric of the pile.

The approach to it is down a steep narrow lane from the street in which Hauser's hotel is situated. On either side, this lane is lined with booths filled with cups cut out of the bituminous rocks of Sodom—chaplets made of olive wood, or of the hard red seed of a berry which grows in abundance near Mecca, called 'the eggs of the duck'—and mother-of-pearl shells bearing rude *intaglios* of the Ecce Homo, the Virgin and Child, and the apostles. During the visit of the pilgrims at Easter, the occupants of these booths drive a short-lived but tolerably profitable trade; and at other times, if there be a stranger in either of the hotels, his breakfast-table is daily covered with their commodities. This lane leads into a large court, surrounded on three sides with buildings. On the open side there are several steps leading down into the court, and the remains of a row of broken pillars, which show that a portico or cloister once existed there, probably leading into the Hospital of St John, which stood just beyond it to the south. Facing this to the north is the principal entrance to the church, which originally consisted of two large doors with beautifully moulded arches. The one to the east has been built up by the Mohammedans, leaving only one for access. Above these are two large windows, with ornamental arches similar to those of the doors, while the building is finished at the top with a flat roof, which suggests

the idea of a work left incomplete. The other two sides of the court are occupied by the campanile and chapels dedicated to various saints, among which I only recollect that of Abraham's sacrifice, which, strange to say, has found a place among the heterogeneous wonders of this pretentious place.

The door being at length opened, a Latin monk was summoned to attend me, and advancing about twenty feet into the southern transept, a white marble slab raised about one foot and a half from the ground, was pointed out as *the stone of unction*, on which our Lord's body was anointed before it was deposited in the tomb. A number of lamps depending from the ceiling were burning above it. Whether there is a stone underneath which might have served that purpose it is impossible to say, probably not, otherwise they would have let a portion be seen, as they have done in other localities; but, at all events, the piece of marble now pointed out as the stone of unction had nothing to do with our Lord's crucifixion or burial. Passing onwards we came into the choir, which is surrounded by apartments on the second storey, and lighted by a cupola from above. From this point, better than from any other perhaps, one can form an idea of the shape and size of the church. To the west there is a rotunda, 73 feet in diameter, surrounded by a double row of galleries, in which the monks live who are in actual service, and it is lighted by the dome which is so conspicuous an object from without. To the east there is the Greek Church, which is designated 'the Centre of the World;' and, around them both, there are passages, chapels, and niches innumerable.

In the middle of the rotunda there is a marble shrine or chapel, consisting of two small chambers; this is the Chapel of the Holy Sepulchre. The first chamber contains a square block of white marble, about three feet in height; and we are told with stolid gravity, it is the stone of the door of the sepulchre on which the angel sat, while we measure with incredulous eye a door about six feet high. The interior chamber is 'the new tomb' wherein our Lord lay, the most deeply interesting spot on earth, if there were any good ground for believing the tradition which makes it so; but I could not look on it in that light. The only thing to which I can compare it, to convey an idea to those who have not seen it, is a remarkably narrow state-cabin in a ship, having only one low berth in it. I judged it to be about seven feet long by five feet wide, and perhaps eight feet in height. It is above ground, constructed throughout with white marble, and has not the most distant resemblance to an ancient sepulchral cave. Along one wall of the interior is placed a white

marble slab about two feet broad, which occupies the whole length of the cell; the rest is a passage by which access is gained to it, and not more than three or four persons can stand in it conveniently at a time. Silver and brass lamps, in great profusion, hung from the roof, some of the former of most beautiful workmanship and rare value. Can it be believed that those who are careful to exhibit a portion of rock at the spot they point out as Calvary, should have covered from view all trace of the rock-sepulchre, both within and without, if they were conscious of its existence? The monk fell on his knees, and continued in that attitude while we remained in the sepulchre. I dare say he thought me a Pagan because I did not imitate his example; but independently of the conviction I entertain, that from the population of Jerusalem under the kings of the house of David, the site of this church must have been included within the second wall, and that Calvary must be sought elsewhere, I had in my mind at that moment a remark which Bishop Gobat had made to me a night or two before, that, even if it could be proved to be Christ's sepulchre, that is the only place of which it is said, 'He is not here.' There are two holes in the side of this cell, through which on Easter day the Greek patriarch sends forth the holy fire. This impious farce is too well known to require description. I was told by two Mohammedans at different times a story of Ibrahim Pasha, relative to the holy fire, which, whether true or otherwise, is at least characteristic of the man, and exhibits the view the Mussulmen entertain of the pretended miracle. While he occupied Jerusalem, he resolved, it was said, to witness the ceremony; but before the patriarch entered the cell, he called him to his presence, and insisted on having him searched, which resulted in the discovery of a small bottle of alcohol, and a box of lucifer matches!

At the west end of the sepulchre stands the Coptic Church, in the middle of the rotunda, but it only contains an altar and a few lamps. Opposite to it, a door in the western side of the rotunda, leads into the Armenian, the Syrian or Jacobite, and the Maronite Chapels. In the latter, which is the poorest of them all, there is a small chamber containing a tomb, cut out in the rock, with niches on two sides of it for bodies. This is said to be the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathæa and of Nicodemus. Admitting this to be an ancient tomb, no argument can be founded on it to prove that this site must have been without the second wall; as the Jebusites, who dwelt in the stronghold on Zion till David's day, and who, in common with the other ancient inhabitants of Palestine, were accustomed to use these rock-sepulchres,

would probably bury on Akra ; but the existence of their tombs would form no barrier to its being included within the walls by the kings of Judah.

The Latin Church is at the extremity of the northern transept, a dark and gloomy chamber, containing nothing very remarkable, except the half of the pillar to which our Lord was bound when he was scourged ; the other half having been taken to Rome. It stands in a small recess in the wall, and can only be seen through a brass grating, a serious hindrance one would imagine to the relic worshippers. The monks have found out a remedy however, for the virtue of the pillar is transferred to the end of a cane, and thence kissed away by the lips of the pilgrim. The Greek Church, as already stated, is in the middle portion of the building on the eastern side of the choir ; it is richer in its furniture and fittings than any of the other churches, but in other respects presents nothing remarkably striking to one already familiar with the general appearance of the Greek churches. Stalls for the clergy are ranged along the walls, in one of which, the monk on duty was sleeping when we entered. I was told that there are thirty monks belonging to the different churches always resident within the walls of the edifice, and that they serve in courses, like the priests in the Jewish temple, one month at a time. There are aisles outside the Greek Church, in which, among many others, were pointed out the chapel of the prison, where, they say, the Lord's feet were put in the stocks, while the cross was being erected ; the chapel of Longinus the centurion, marking the place of his conversion, when he said, 'Certainly this was a righteous man.' and a place which has been most appropriately named the Chapel of the Invention, for a bolder invention than that which it is said to commemorate, can scarcely be conceived. An inclined passage leads down into a kind of pit, which has evidently been used in ancient days as a quarry. This place is said to have been one of the common receptacles for all the filth and rubbish of the city, and here the three crosses on which our Lord and the two thieves were crucified, were cast. The Empress Helena, mother of Constantine, came to Jerusalem, and set on foot a diligent search for the true cross. A small chamber cut out in the rock, with a window looking into the passage, is pointed out as the place where she sat and watched the excavation of this pit. The search was successful. Though 300 years had elapsed, all the three crosses were discovered sound and entire ! But let not the reader be surprised at that—the more wonderful part of the story is yet to come. There was a difficulty in identifying which was the Lord's



cross,—and a veritable *experimentum crucis* took place, for all three were applied in turn to a dead body, and when the true cross touched it, it was restored to life again! Such is the story which is palmed off annually on the ignorant pilgrims who visit this shrine. Can any one deem it unreasonable that, after hearing this and many similar absurdities, we should turn away from these monkish traditions as a tissue of lies, with a feeling of indignation against those who have associated the most ludicrous absurdities with things so sacred?

There is one other locality which must be noticed ere we leave the church. Returning from the Chapel of the Invention along the southern aisle, a stair leads up to a dark chapel on the second floor, where a Franciscan monk kept guard. This they said was Calvary. Three round holes, edged with rims of brass, are pointed out as the places in which the crosses were fixed; and, through a brass grating at the side, you are invited to satisfy yourself that the veritable native rock is in that place just beneath. There was a circumstantiality in all this that savoured strongly of impiety. Turning away from it I asked the Franciscan whence he came? From Rimini, in the Roman States, was the reply; but he had been long an absentee from his own country, and seemed greatly delighted to meet one who had lately come from it. He belonged to the Franciscan convent in the Isle of Cyprus, but had been sent to Jerusalem for three years, a few months only of which had expired. In answer to a question, whether he liked Cyprus or Jerusalem best, he gave the former decidedly the preference. ‘*La il vino è divinamente buono; qui si sta male male!*’<sup>1</sup> but, added he, ‘it is a great honour to guard the holy places, and for that one must make a sacrifice.’ The distance in a straight line between the reputed Calvary and sepulchre is about 100 feet. Returning now to the south transept there is a small chapel below Calvary, called the Chapel of Adam. On either side of the entrance are the tombs of Godfrey de Bouillon and Baldwin I., the first two kings of Jerusalem in the time of the Crusades. These are invested not only with an interest arising from history, but also from their being true monuments in a place where everything around savours of fiction. In this chapel I was shown, through a small opening in the wall, a portion of the natural rock with a fissure in it, which I was told was produced by the earthquake at the Lord’s death. The monk further added, that our Lord’s blood, dropping from the cross, had penetrated thus far; and, at the identical spot where it ceased, the skull of Adam had been found! I

<sup>1</sup> There the wine is divinely good; here one is very badly off!

was on the point of saluting him, after the fashion of his country, with a '*che bella bugia*;' but, bridling my indignation, I paid the fee and hurried from the place, resolving never to set foot in it again. Besides having crowded into that building the places where every incident in our Lord's sufferings, burial, and resurrection took place, they have also contrived to find a niche in it for Adam, Abraham, Melchisedek, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathæa, the Centurion, and the two thieves! It is astonishing they should not have buried the Virgin Mary there instead of in the Valley of Jehoshaphat! How any Protestant can swallow such a dose I am at a loss to conceive; and yet, the fact is beyond dispute, that some bolt it every year without difficulty.

A few steps to the east of the ruined portico, in front of the Church of the Sepulchre, there are the ruins of another Christian Church, called Santa Maria, which, from what remains, seems to have been rich in architectural beauty. Leaving it, and turning along a street north of the bazaars, we enter the Via Dolorosa, a long street which runs down from the north of the church of the sepulchre to the street coming from the Damascus gate, and then, after a short *detour*, runs onward to the Bab Sitti Mariam. It is well known that it derives its name from the supposition that our Lord passed along it from Pilate's judgment seat to Golgotha; and various places connected with that solemn event are pointed out along its course—as, for example, an arch over the street which is called *Ecce Homo*, because there Pilate led out Jesus wearing the crown of thorns to the people—and the Chapel of the Flagellation; but as, at the corner of it, there is also pointed out the stone on which Lazarus sat, and hard by the house of Dives, I fancy the reader would willingly be spared such details. Descending the Via Dolorosa, therefore, which is a steep, narrow, muddy, slippery street, till we are within a few yards of the Bab Sitti Mariam, we shall find ourselves before a large building, apparently a barrack, with a broad outside stair leading up along its side to the door, which is on the first-floor. This is the Seraiyeh or governor's house; and that stair is said to be the representative of the Santa Scala which the Popes filched from Pilate's house, and set up opposite St John Lateran for the destruction of the knees, and the benefit of the souls of those who are condemned to penance. Every stranger who comes to Jerusalem pays a visit to the governor's house; for the best view of the interior of the Harám es Sherif is to be had from its roof. My first visit was in company with Mr Graham, under the auspices of the Austrian Consul's Kavass, who cleared the way for us through the Turkish soldiers with his silver-headed staff.

It is probable that this house, which is situated at the north-west enclosure of the Harám, occupies, in part at least, the site of the tower of Antonia from a stair connecting which with the temple, Paul after his apprehension, addressed the fanatic multitude who had nearly torn him to pieces in its courts. As this house stands close to the boundary wall, one of the best general views of the Harám is to be had from it, though for details I greatly preferred that from the roof of Dr Barclay's house, on the eastern brow of Mount Zion. The size of this enclosure is, in general terms, 510 yards in length, by 318 in breadth. Its area is covered with grass of most refreshing green, and dotted with cypress and olive trees, a practice probably borrowed from ancient times, which gives a special vividness to David's description of his own privileges in Psalm lii. 8—'I am like a green olive tree in the house of God.' It seems to be the favourite promenade of the women of Jerusalem, as numbers are to be seen walking about here every evening, or sitting under the shade of the trees. Footpaths lead across to small mosques or oratories which are erected in all directions, probably over spots reckoned sacred by the Mohammedans, as they seem to be built on no regular plan. Near the south-eastern corner there are several small mosques, among which is the one built by Omar, the one which usually bears his name having nothing whatever to do with him. The Great Mosque, called Kubbet es Sakhara, stands on an elevated platform to which there is access by a flight of steps, surmounted by a number of graceful Saracenic arches, and appears from the Governor's house to be nearly in the centre of the enclosure lengthwise, but much nearer to the western than to the eastern wall. It consists of two stories, the lowest of octagonal shape, the upper circular, above which rises the graceful dome covered with lead. It is encrusted outside with glazed tiles of green and yellow



colour, and the windows of the upper storey are made of circular tubes of the same kind placed one above another, thus. There are four doors to this mosque facing the four cardinal points. It was built A.D. 688, not by Omar, but by the tenth Khalif, Abd el Melik Ibn Marwan, and receives its name Kubbet es Sakhara, 'Dome of the Rock,' from a portion of the limestone rock which it encloses, on which it is supposed the great brazen altar stood. The elevated platform on which it stands, and which is approached by a flight of steps, makes this supposition not an improbable one. Had my visit to Jerusalem been one year later, when the gates of the Harám were thrown open to the Duke of Brabant and his suite, consisting, I believe, of nearly all the Europeans then in Jerusalem, I should

have been able to add from my own observation a description of the interior of the mosques, but in 1854 such a desecration was never dreamt of as possible. In an appendix to this volume, however, will be found an interesting letter from my esteemed friend the Rev. Dr Clason of Edinburgh, who enjoyed that privilege. I procured, through my dragoman, an amulet, which is sold to the faithful in the Mosque of Sakhara, and held by them in the highest veneration, as it is firmly believed to have the power of delivering those who wear it from all evil. It consists of a sheet of paper covered with cabalistic signs.

Quite at the southern end of the enclosure stands the mosque of El Aksa. Its form is totally different from the one just described, and one perceives at a glance that it was not originally constructed for a mosque. It is in fact a Christian Church, built by Justinian, but which, owing partly to decay and partly to the whim of successive Khalifs, after the invasion of the Saracens, has undergone great alterations. Mr Williams mentions, on the authority of Hovenden, a curious fact connected at once with this church and the history of our own country, viz., that the murderers of Thomas á Becket were buried before the door of this edifice.<sup>1</sup> Josephus mentions that the platform of Mount Moriah being too small for the extensive buildings and courts connected with the temple, Solomon, and afterwards Herod, adopted the expedient of enlarging it by vaults resting on immense piles raised from the slope of the hill. Investigations made by persons who have gained access under one pretext or another, of late years into the mosque, have certified to the perfect correctness of the historian's statement. To Ali Bey and Mr Catherwood, I believe, we are indebted for the first intimation in modern times of these vaults beneath the southern part of the temple area. Dr Barclay having had free access for months to every part of the enclosure, took most exact plans and measurements of these subterranean vaults. He informed me that he had discovered in one of them a well of great depth, which he intended to explore, and which possibly may solve the question as to a connection between the ancient well at the Hummam esh Shefa and the pools of the Virgin and Siloam. Others had been used as great reservoirs, providing an almost unlimited supply of water for the use of the temple, and in making his measurements he had to wade in some of them knee-deep. It was on this account that the temple

<sup>1</sup> On their grave-stone there was the following inscription—'Hic jacent miseri qui martyrizaverunt beatum Thomam Archiepiscopum Cantuariensem.'—Williams Holy City, vol. ii., p. 309.

enclosure, when turned into a fortress in the later periods of the Jewish history, was able to sustain siege after siege without its defenders suffering any inconvenience from thirst.

The greater part of Justinian's Church (the Mosque El Aksa), is built upon the artificial platform supported by these vaults. Having received a hint from Dr Barclay that it was possible to gain access to them by climbing up to a window in a ruined building, which projects beyond the southern wall of the town, I went thither one day to make the attempt, accompanied by his son, who led us so successfully into the quarries below Bezétha. The usual amount of watching and hiding, when any one passed along the path, was necessary in order to get up to the spot unobserved. Having reached it in safety, we found a window without sash or any protection, about twelve feet from the ground, but the wall was in such a ruinous condition that it threatened to fall every instant; and after two or three unsuccessful attempts, in which we brought down a shower of stones upon our heads, we were obliged to abandon the hope of getting in. At the same place, however, there is another strongly grated window, without frame, which gives light to the very vaults we wished to visit, and climbing up to it, we enjoyed a most satisfactory view, without the danger to which we might have been exposed had some of the black porters found us within. There seemed to be four vaults all running parallel to one another from north to south, the arches of which rested on massive square piers of mason work. These gradually diminished in height as they approached the northern extremity of the building. The pillars and vaults rejoiced in a very glaring coat of whitewash, which modernised their appearance, and made it impossible to form a guess whether they belonged to the time of Herod or Justinian; but from their resemblance to the other vaults farther to the east, which certainly are not of Roman origin, Dr Barclay attributes them to Jewish times. In appearance, though not in height, they reminded me much of the ancient *piscina* at Constantinople, known by the name of the Cento Colonne. The double gate of Roman architecture now walled up, a little to the east of Aksa, which was noticed in describing the modern walls, seems to have afforded access to this crypt from the south; and as the ancient Jewish gate which Mr Tipping discovered in the same wall is close to the window from which we had the view of the interior, it is not unlikely that the substructions of the mosque of Aksa served as the approach to the temple area from this southern gate, as they did afterwards to the Church of the Virgin from the Roman one. In crusading times El Aksa was given up to the Knights Templars, and hence the origin

of their name. Dr Barclay told me that the stained glass in the windows of this mosque is the richest and most beautiful he ever saw.

The Harám es Sherif is the most deeply interesting spot in Jerusalem. Being, till lately, *tabooed*, both to Jews and Christians, there are no incredible traditions to disturb the solemnity of one's thoughts in gazing upon it; and many were the visits I paid both to the Mount of Olives and to Dr Barclay's house, for the purpose of fixing well its features in my memory. On this mount the Father of the Faithful erected his altar, and prepared to slay his son at God's command; and here, in later days, David built his altar on the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where the angel of the pestilence had stayed his hand. On that platform before us stood the first temple, in which the symbol of Jehovah's glorious presence dwelt, and from which Ezekiel, in a vision, saw it departing on account of the people's wickedness, and lingering for a while on the Mount of Olives, ere it finally disappeared. The weary travellers who had escaped from captivity beyond the Euphrates, beheld the ruins of their holy and beautiful house scattered along its surface, and wept at the remembrance of its magnificence when they witnessed the dedication of the Second Temple. Within that enclosure the Lord of Glory often taught, and through His presence in it, "the glory of the latter house became greater than of the former." It was of this place that God said, "Here will I dwell, for I have desired it;" and in the sacrificial victims, which for hundred of years were consumed on this spot, there was remembrance made continually of the promise of a nobler sacrifice, which alone could procure the remission of sins. If the rock could find a voice, how strange the vicissitudes to which it could bear witness in comparatively later times. Here Herod built a costly temple, which the Romans in their turn overthrew. Here Adrian established the worship of Jupiter, after having imposed the name of *Ælia Capitolina* on the city; and Julian, in hatred of the Christianity which he had abandoned, strove in vain to found another temple, and to establish the Jewish ceremonial again. This holy mountain has witnessed a corrupt Christianity, raising its fane in honour of the Virgin in a place where every ancient association was centred in the Son; and now in turn it is held by a monotheistic race, who trample the Son of God under the feet of their false prophet. The page of its history is not yet closed; another change awaits it yet, and the fiat has gone forth, 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn it: and it shall be no more, till He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him.'—Ezekiel xxi. 27.

I have already described a visit to the church of the Greek convent

of St John, which was situated exactly opposite the windows of my hotel. I was awakened every morning during my stay by the tune upon two sticks, which I had first heard at the convent of Ghebel Mousa, as a substitute for the tolling of a bell. The convent is of large dimensions, room being provided in it for the accommodation of pilgrims who visit the city at Easter; but I was told that after being entertained for a day or two *gratis*, those among them who are too poor to pay, are very unceremoniously thrust out. An open gallery gives admission to the apartments of the monks, and my surprise was great to find that almost every one of them possessed a female inmate. As I had always understood the Greek monks are not allowed to marry, though the parish priests are. I made inquiry, and found that these women were their concubines, and that they are at no pains to conceal their immorality. According to the accounts which I received from a well-informed source, the crass ignorance and bigotry of these men are almost incredible, and of course these are faithfully reflected in the Arab population who are under their sway.

The Greek Church, in point of population, is the most important of all the Eastern churches. According to an estimate made some years ago, its adherents in Syria and Palestine numbered 345,000, while those of all the other Christian churches taken together do not amount to more than 260,000. A majority also of the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem belongs to it, though the Government census of the city does not give it so overwhelming a superiority as throughout the country at large. The Latin and Greek churches are at variance with regard to the time for the observance of Easter; the assumption by the Pope of the title of Vicar of God, and Universal Bishop; the administration of the Eucharist in both kinds; and the celibacy of the clergy,—the Greek Church permitting, nay enjoining, marriage on the ordinary priest, and yet inconsistently enough making celibacy or widowhood an essential requisite for the higher grade of bishop. While the Latin Church, and the Reformed churches generally, hold that the Holy Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son, the Greek, together with all the other Eastern churches, condemns this dogma as heretical, and maintains that He proceeds from the Father only. The worship of statues is not permitted in the Greek Church, but their place is supplied by pictures, to which the same worship is given which the Latins bestow upon the former. In all else the Greek Church is as corrupt in doctrine as the Church of Rome. It holds all the seven sacraments of that Church, and sets forth in its symbols baptismal regeneration, the sacrifice of the mass, the interpretation of Holy Scripture only by

the authority of the Church, prayers for the dead, invocation of saints, salvation by penance, and a host of other minor heresies.

The Latin convent lies to the north-west of the hotel; and, during the last fortnight of my stay in Jerusalem, I made several visits to travellers who had taken up their abode there. It is called the Casa Nuova, having been rebuilt and enlarged not many years ago for the reception of pilgrims. Before the hotels were opened, this was the place where travellers from Western Europe found accommodation. It is a very spacious but gloomy building; I forgot, however, to ascertain the number of monks who reside in it. Between the ecclesiastics of the Latin and Greek Church a constant warfare is maintained, and the most pernicious effects are produced on the *soi-disant* Christian population, by the unceasing efforts made by these rival sects to bribe and buy over their respective adherents. The Latin Patriarch was absent from Jerusalem during my residence there, in consequence of a disturbance which had arisen from this disgraceful practice. The pretty village of Beit Jala, which I have mentioned as situated on a hill side to the west of Bethlehem, is inhabited by Christians who belonged to the Greek Church. The Latin Patriarch had found the means of buying over the whole population; and without a scruple they transferred their allegiance. The Patriarch forthwith purchased a house, and went to reside in the village. This came to the ears of the Greek authorities a week or two before my arrival, who bought back the population bodily to the Greek faith by a larger bribe, and stirred them up to expel the Latin usurper. Nothing loath, they attacked his house, fired shots into his windows, and compelled him to fly. In company with M. Botta, the French Consul, he immediately set out for Yaffa to await the arrival of the new Pasha of Jerusalem, who was daily expected, and to request his interference. When the people are thus taught by pretended ministers of religion to sell themselves to the highest bidder, it will not surprise the reader to learn that offers have more than once been made to Bishop Gobat of a wholesale transfer of the population of Bethlehem, provided he was willing to pay a handsome price.

The Armenian Convent, and the palace of the Patriarch, are situated on the Hill of Zion, to the south of the citadel; and, with the gardens attached, probably occupy a part of the ground on which Herod's palace formerly stood. The Patriarch's residence is quite modern, and one of the most handsome houses in Jerusalem. The Church is entered by a low door, strongly fortified against any attack of the Arab population. For interior fittings and decoration, it surpasses any



other church in the city. On one occasion, when I visited it, service was going on in a little dark side-chapel. There were about a dozen priests assisting, all gorgeously robed, and a number of boys holding the minor orders, who acted as choristers, and swung the censers till the church became blue with the smoke of incense. A crowd of bare-footed worshippers were prostrate on the floor; and a corresponding crowd of red and yellow slippers, which had been cast off by them on their entrance, choked up the vestibule without. This is the eastern mode of showing reverence in God's house; they never uncover their heads. One of the bishops, with mitre, and crozier in hand, stood in the doorway, and, after prayers were over, made a sermon or address to the multitude. It probably had reference to a small picture which formed the altar-piece within, as he often turned and pointed to it. A barefaced plan for extorting money from the worshippers amused me much. After the address, which lasted about ten minutes, was over, two or three of the inferior clergy issued out of the chapel, bearing each a faggot of farthing rushlights, which they offered for sale to the people for a few *parás*, chiding sharply those who declined to buy. I watched with some curiosity what should come next, and soon ascertained that this was a qualification for kissing the picture within, though, for good reasons, it was not deemed necessary to *light* the tapers. A string of those who had provided themselves with wax now marched to the chapel door, inside of which stood another priest who received the tapers, just as the check-taker at the theatre would the tickets of the entrants, and handed them to one of the inferiors, who straightway issued into the crowd to dispose anew of the self-same tapers, while the robed worshipper kissed the saint's picture, and retired through another door. Those whom we had heard abused by the priests were no doubt up to the trick, and refused to be caught a second time. The device was so exceedingly transparent, that much trouble would have been saved by the simple announcement—a kiss of this saint, whose intercession is all-powerful, may be had for so many *paras*.

The Armenian Church holds the seven sacraments in common with the Latin and Greek Churches, and teaches transubstantiation, baptismal regeneration, the intercession of saints, and adoration of the cross. All that is required for admission to the priesthood among them is, that the candidate be able to read, and that he hold the orthodox faith. An account was given me of the consecration of an Armenian bishop, which had taken place not very long before my arrival, when a difficulty arose because he could not read. Some of the chapter or

council, in whom the power of consecration is vested, demurred, and wished to set him aside; an adjournment, however, was carried, putting off the consecration for a week, at the end of which the right reverend had acquired by *cramming* a sufficient acquaintance with his alphabet to secure the mitre.

The Copts, Maronites, and Jacobites have all convents in Jerusalem; but as the number of adherents belonging to each of these communities is comparatively small, and their influence on the surrounding population absolutely *nîl*. I did not waste my time by visiting them. Suffice it to say, that the churches which they represent all hold, with greater or less distinctness of expression, the same corrupt doctrines which characterize those already described.<sup>1</sup>

Can it be conceived that Protestant England should have such tenderness for these lapsed churches, and such fear lest they should meet with any annoyance in destroying the souls of men, as to have made provision that the authorised ministers of her own Established Church in the East should in no way interfere with them? Can it be conceived that the Church of England should be so cowardly and time-serving as to accept at the hands of any statesman, or any foreign sovereign, an injunction so flagrantly in defiance of the Lord's command: 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature?' It appears that some understanding of this kind was arrived at between the British Government and the King of Prussia when the Protestant Bishoprick of Jerusalem was established, and that the late Archbishop of Canterbury endorsed it, and actually addressed a circular to the different patriarchs, assuring them that the Anglican bishop was charged '*not to intermeddle in any way with the jurisdiction of the patriarchs, or other ecclesiastical dignitaries bearing rule in the churches of the East.*'<sup>2</sup> This unscriptural obligation, and shameful bartering away of the liberties of Christ's Church, were bearing abundant fruit when I was in Jerusalem. Dr Alexander, the first bishop, seems to have acted out the spirit of the Archbishop's letter, and to have devoted himself to doing good to his own nation (for by birth he was a son of Abraham), in consequence of which his memory is still held in high respect by the Jews of Jerusalem. But when Dr Gobat succeeded to the bishoprick, he had not only a handful of

<sup>1</sup> Any one who wishes to become better acquainted with the doctrines and practices of the Eastern churches, is referred to a brief but very accurate description of them which Dr Wilson has added to the second volume of his work.

<sup>2</sup> See Williams' Holy City, vol. ii., p. 596.

converted Jews to look after, but also a number of native Christians, once belonging to one or other of those Eastern churches, who, through the agency of the American Mission, then withdrawn, had been converted to Protestantism. Some of these, feeling none of the scruples of Dr Howley and the British and Prussian governments, and having some love for the souls of men awakened in them, did not hesitate, in their intercourse with friends and neighbours, to use some such language as Philip used to Nathaniel, and as any man in earnest about salvation would use to another whom he believes to be perishing: 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph.'—John i. 45.

Such conversations were not without result. From time to time the bishop was visited by inquirers, some of whom came saying, 'We would know what these things mean;' and others, with the still more interesting question, 'What must I do to be saved?' Trammelled by the Archbishop's letter, he had never made any aggressive attack on the Eastern churches; but now the question came to be, 'Am I, a minister of Christ, at liberty to drive away without an answer those who have voluntarily sought me out, declaring that their consciences are awakened, and that they can find no peace in the teaching of the church to which they once belonged?' Those who know the bishop need not be told the answer. Every inquirer was received and instructed, and, after due examination, admitted to the Protestant Church. Of course this awoke the wrath of the various patriarchs; but the fiercest howl of indignation was that which arose from the Puseyite section of the Church of England, hounded on by Mr Williams, who had been chaplain to the former bishop. This Puseyite agitation was at its height in England during my visit to Jerusalem; every paper that arrived brought lists of *soi-disant* Protestant clergymen of the Church of England who adhered to a protest or remonstrance drawn up by Mr Williams or some of his friends, and addressed, I forget whether to the Archbishop of Canterbury or to the Foreign Secretary, or both. It was strange and most unfortunate to see allies from such a quarter fighting the battle of the lapsed Eastern churches. That such deliberate attempts to injure his usefulness and impede the Lord's work caused Bishop Gobat much distress, there can be no doubt; but he went quietly on in what he believed to be the path of duty. He had already put the case as I have just stated it clearly before all the four archbishops of the United Church of England and Ireland, and had received their approbation of his conduct; and I am glad to learn that, since that time, Lord

Palmerston has authoritatively stated that the bishop has a right to receive those from other communions who apply to him for instruction, and afterwards to deal with them as his flock, Archbishop Howley's famous encyclical notwithstanding. It must be matter of deep thankfulness to all the Churches of Christ that, when this question was raised, a man of such deep and genuine piety, and of such quiet but prudent determination, occupied the bishoprick. That God has blessed him in the faithful stand he then made, is abundantly evidenced by the native Protestant congregations which now exist in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nablous, Yaffa, and Nazareth. I believe that the work has already taken such a development, that, by the blessing of God, no future bishop, even should he belong to the semi-Romanist school, shall be able to destroy it.

Continuing along the street which runs from the Armenian convent towards the south wall, a short walk brings us to the Bab Nebi Daoud, or the Zion Gate. Inside it there is an open space, just where the hill begins to descend towards the east, a part of which is occupied by a small village of miserable huts, separated by a wall from the rest of the town. One is naturally struck by the odd whim of a little walled village within the city, and led to ask what it means. It is the quarter of the lepers. More than a hundred of these miserable creatures live here in a community of their own, chased away from the society of their fellow-men, and propagate the malady from generation to generation. The leprosy with which they are affected is not of the same kind with that I had seen in Wadi Gerúr. It has all the appearance of elephantiasis, sometimes affecting the feet and legs, at other times the arms and other parts of the body. I was told by a medical gentleman that it was a scrofulous affection, which first breaks out in ulcers and boils, and usually rots away the portion of the body affected until it drops off. These poor creatures are to be seen every day seated along the paths, near the gates, exhibiting their sores, and begging earnestly in the name of God for alms. I know not whether, if taken in its earlier stages, the disease could be eradicated:—the provisions of the Levitical law regarding it would lead us to suppose it might; but when it reaches an advanced stage it is altogether incurable, and the poor sufferer dies by inches, sometimes in excruciating agony. It is a humiliating spectacle, and one calculated to teach us a still more humiliating lesson concerning our own impure state as affected by the deadly leprosy of sin.

Passing the lazar-house, and descending the eastern side of the hill of Zion, we come to the Jewish quarter, in the midst of which the

Mohammedans have established the public slaughter-house, or rather *field*, of the city. No sanitary regulations seem to be put in force for cleansing it, and the stench, particularly in summer, seriously affects the health of the poor Jews who live in its neighbourhood. Its position in the Hart el Yahoud may be purely accidental; but, considering that a portion of the Christian quarter is in like manner infected by a large tannery, there is reason to suspect in both a studied insult, put by the cruel Moslem on races whom he hates. The Jews are divided into the Sephardim or Spanish Jews, the Ashkenazim or German Jews, and the Karaites, who adhere to the Scriptures as they are, and reject all rabbinical glosses, but of the last there were but two or three in the city. According to a private census made by the rabbis for the Rothschilds in 1854, the number of Sephardim, including women and children, was estimated at 4000, and that of the Ashkenazim at 2000 souls. The synagogues of both are in the Hart el Yahoud. That belonging to the Sephardim is a spacious building, but very humble in appearance, both as regards external architecture and inward decoration; indeed, the latter consists simply of Hebrew inscriptions. The reading desk, which is placed in the centre, is capable of containing a score of people, and for size and height is out of all proportion to the rest of the building. The congregation seemed much more careless in their worship than the Ashkenazim. The synagogue of the latter is but a few paces distant from the other. It is very small, and was crowded to excess on every occasion when I visited it. The long hair falling on the shoulders, which all the Ashkenazim wear, the sheepskin caps, or damaged *beavers*, and long loose robes, resembling dressing-gowns, in which their dress consists, as well as their paler complexions, proclaim them unmistakably to be of European birth. They seemed all, if not very devout, at least very intent on their worship, affording in this respect an agreeable contrast with the Sephardim, and there was no speaking to one another while the service was going on. It is inconceivable with what rapidity they rattle over the words, as each joins with violent vociferation in the responses, scattering abroad a perfect flood of spray, and rocking the body to and fro, as if literal bodily exercise could profit something.

With a few exceptions, the Jews at Jerusalem are supported by charity, bestowed by their brethren in Europe. Few of them are engaged in any remunerative employment, though circumstances have since proved that in most cases this arises rather from the absence of such employment than from any unwillingness on their part to take advantage of it. The war which had begun between Russia and

Turkey had cut off the supplies which they annually received from the north of Europe, and that circumstance, added to the high price of wheat, had reduced the greater portion of them to a state of great distress, and some to absolute starvation. The British Consul and Mrs Finn entered warmly into their sufferings, and daily a crowd of poor shivering women, whose features were pinched with starvation, might be seen in the court-yard before their house, waiting for the bread which the latter herself distributed among them. Besides giving largely of their own means, and receiving the aid of the British residents, the case was of so clamant a nature, that their friends at home, and the travellers who visited Jerusalem, were called upon to lend their aid. It was an emergency which called for a special effort. I was much pleased to find, however, that both the Bishop and the Consul disapproved, as a general measure, of the bestowal of aid in the shape of charity either to Jew or Christian, as calculated to engender habits of idleness and improvidence; and were resolved, so far as their means allowed, to teach those who applied to them habits of industry and self-reliance, by requiring an equivalent in labour for the assistance they received.

Mr Finn had previously set this system in operation, by holding out the promise of wages to those Jews who chose to work in a vineyard which he possessed. But when the attention of English Christians was called to the famishing condition of the poor Jews of Jerusalem, and money began to pour in for their aid, an industrial plantation was leased for the express purpose of employing them in manual labour, and young and old, learned and unlearned, vied with each other for the privilege of being permitted to earn their daily bread. Three months after I left, there were no less than 107 Jews gaining their own livelihood, instead of being the idle recipients of the precarious alms doled out to them by their bondmasters the rabbis, who did everything in their power to keep them still in beggary and bondage. Though I have not obtained her permission, I venture to insert an extract from a letter of Mrs Finn's to a friend, in which the eagerness of the poor people for work is most graphically described. 'The number is daily increasing. Old men of seventy and eighty, rabbis, schoolmasters, scribes, old soldiers, sailors, shoemakers, dyers, bakers, etc., all eager to earn their  $15\frac{3}{4}$  piastres (about 2s. 10d.) per week. It is astonishing to one that people unaccustomed to exposure or labour, and feeble from recent starvation, can endure the heat of our summer's sun, but this is not thought of by them. We have at present an application from two sons of one of the oldest Spanish

families in Jerusalem, and formerly one of the proudest. These people—rabbis by descent—are entreating to be sent to the fields like the rest.' The work thus inaugurated by our excellent Consul and his wife, stimulated the exertions of Sir Moses Montefiore, and the rich English Jews, to imitate the example, by providing additional means for the industrial occupation of their *co-religionaires*. For long ages the Jews have been strangers to the tilling of the soil; who can tell whether, besides a present benefit, these efforts may not, in the providence of God, result in the preparation of the people for the cultivation of their land, when it shall no more be termed 'forsaken' or 'desolate'?

Before bringing to a close these remarks about the Jews, and the efforts made for improving their social and moral condition, I must refer to Miss Cowper's Industrial Institution for Jewesses, which interested me exceedingly,—and than which, I saw nothing, humanly speaking, more likely to awaken slowly but surely inquiries regarding Christianity. There is no restriction made as to the age of those who are received; married women and single, aged women and children, are all received, and taught to sew, embroider, etc. They are paid so much a day for the work they perform, so that, besides acquiring habits which will make them permanently useful in their own families, they are enabled to earn something towards their present support. The furniture is of the simplest kind, as each Jewess brings a pillow for herself to sit on, which they range along the walls of the room. While they are busy with their allotted labour, Miss Cowper and her two assistants read to them in Hebrew, one day out of the Old Testament, and the next out of the New. Questions are put on both sides, and lively discussions often arise. In this way they hear the Scriptures with the outward ear at least, and the way of salvation is set before many who, but for this institution, would never be reached. The result remains with God; but the plan of combining temporal benefit with spiritual instruction, not to converts alone, but to all who choose to avail themselves of it, is one worthy of all imitation. The rabbis are much enraged at it, and have done their utmost, even by threats of excommunication, to prevent the attendance of Jewish females, but in vain. At the time I was there, two large rooms were completely filled with the work-women.

Divorce is a matter of as frequent occurrence, and of as easy accomplishment, among the Jews as among the Mohammedans. From the manner in which our Lord speaks of it, it seemed to have been a

crying evil in His day, and it continues to be so still. Originally instituted as a remedy only in cases of conjugal infidelity, such cases are now the rarest to which it is applied. It has degenerated into a system of legalised seduction, and is productive of incalculable mischief. Miss Cowper complained of it as the source of much temporal misery to the Jewesses of Jerusalem, who, after receiving 'the bill of divorcement,' were left without any means of subsistence. Many of the poor creatures in her Institution were in this case, and the employment she found for them kept them from starvation, and eventually from ruin, both temporal and eternal. In several instances the divorced wife and her supplanter both found employment in the Institution. To the many charitably disposed, who would like to have some object in Jerusalem connected with the Jews in which they might interest themselves, I would recommend Miss Cowper's Institution as one calculated to be productive of the most extensive benefits.

Considering, however, that the great proportion of the Jerusalem Jews do still depend, as in days past, upon the charitable dole of their European brethren, and that the embracing of Christianity would involve the loss of their daily bread, I think the deputation sent out seventeen years ago by the Church of Scotland wisely counselled that Jerusalem should not be selected as the station for a mission to the Jews; and that the General Assembly of the E-stablished Church, at its last meeting, most judiciously resolved, when the proposal was again brought before them, to adhere to the original resolution. One reason for such an opinion is, that the ground is already occupied by a staff of faithful missionaries, amply sufficient for its present demands; and another, that the convert, from the force of circumstances, must be supported from the moment he embraces Christianity by the society or church with which he connects himself,—a feature in conversion which, I am persuaded, not one of our Scottish churches would tolerate for a moment. Indeed, looking at Palestine as a field for missionary exertion, the conclusion at which I arrived, from my own observation, and from the information I was able to gather from others, was, that it would be a great mistake to send out a missionary there, tied down to labour among the Jews alone. With openings every day presenting themselves for usefulness among the Arab Christians, he should have the injunction laid upon him, 'to do good to *all* men as he has opportunity,' and to avail himself of every door of usefulness. Humanly speaking, I believe a Jew is much more likely to be won to Christ by the missionary who can bring him into



contact with a Christian congregation who have renounced their idolatry, and are walking in the fear of God, than if he were confined to the narrow circle of two or three of his own brethren who have been converted before him. I am also sure of this, from having seen it exemplified in Bishop Gobat's schools, that if a missionary opens schools, and provides instruction of a character which outrivals any which the district already affords, he will eventually find the education of Jewish and Christian, and perhaps Mohammedan children, alike committed to him, though it will require time and patience to overcome prejudice. Another object which a missionary establishing himself in that land ought specially to have in view, is the development of the industrial resources of the people; and for this purpose, a town on the sea-coast, such as Akka (St Jean d'Acre), would be the most suitable place for his head-quarters, as it has not yet been occupied either by Bishop Gobat's staff, or by the American missionaries. Some reasons for such a selection will be given when I come to describe Akka.

From the size of Jerusalem, one is very apt to over-estimate the amount of its population, and it is no uncommon thing to hear it spoken of as ranging from 25,000 to 30,000. It is considerably below the first of these numbers, though it is impossible to state it correctly, as the census does not include all who reside in the city, but only the Rayahs. By the last Government census in 1851, the following is the number of males of all ages who are Rayahs, or subjects of the Porte:—

Moslems,	. . . . .	2820
African and Spanish Jews,	. . . . .	970
Greeks,	. . . . .	763
Latins,	. . . . .	428
African Moslems,	. . . . .	400
Armenians,	. . . . .	208
Copts,	. . . . .	79
Greek Catholics,	. . . . .	28
Protestants,	. . . . .	21
Syrian Jacobites,	. . . . .	4
		<hr/> 5721
Deduct from this the African and Spanish Jews, to be included in the general census of that people,		970
		<hr/> 4751

	Brought forward,	4751
Add 100 per cent. for the female Rayah population as above, . . . . .		4751
The whole Jewish population as given by the Jewish Rabbis to the Rothschilds, . . . . .		6000
And if we allow for Latin, Greek, and Armenian monks, and the foreign residents connected with the consulates and missions . . . . .		400
		<hr/>
It will make the entire population about . . . . .		15,902

Although I have left to the last the notice of the English Church and Mission, it is not because they are the least interesting features in modern Jerusalem. The church is, I believe, the property of the Jewish Society of London, and is built on the western side of Mount Zion, facing the citadel. It is chaste and elegant in design, and forms a striking feature on entering the Yaffa Gate. The Consul's house is attached to the church, in order to afford it the protection of the British flag. It is capable of accommodating 300 worshippers; and its interior decorations are quite in keeping with a Protestant place of worship. Above the communion table, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer are inscribed in letters of gold on two beautiful black marble tables. The morning service is performed alternately in Hebrew and German, every morning at seven o'clock, by Mr Nicolayson, for the benefit of the Jewish converts, who are marched thither from the Industrial Institution, where they live, at the northern end of Akra. Some of the good people in Jerusalem seemed to attach much value to this arrangement, though, with my Presbyterian notions, I would have thought it better to have accustomed them to family prayer in the place which serves as their home. On Sundays, the forenoon service is in English; the Bishop, Mr Nicolayson, and Mr Crawford, officiating alternately. I know not how to bestow higher praise than by stating the simple fact, that they do not shove the sermon into a corner, as is too much the case in the Church of England service, and that 'their trumpet gives no uncertain sound.' On Sunday afternoon the service is conducted in German by M. Valentino, a Presbyterian, the King of Prussia's chaplain. On one of the Sabbaths I worshipped there, Mr Nicolayson baptized the child of an Arab Protestant of Bethlehem, officiating in the Arabic language. On another I had the privilege of joining with the congregation in celebrating the Lord's Supper. There was something

to my mind deeply interesting and solemnizing in the whole service. We were engaged in showing forth the Lord's death, in the very city where it had occurred, and in which He had instituted the ordinance. And foreshadowing the undivided communion of the Zion above, there were gathered round the rails of that communion-table the representatives of many nations, English, Germans, Jews, and Arabs, each of whom was addressed by the Bishop or Mr Nicolayson, in his own tongue. On one side I had a converted Jew, to whom the words of the service were spoken in Hebrew; and on the other, a native Christian, to whom they were spoken in Arabic. It seemed as if Pentecostal days were come again. Though the resemblance was chiefly in the diversity of tongues, yet I trust the promise of the effusion of the Spirit was to some extent realized on that occasion.

One of the greatest privileges I enjoyed at Jerusalem, was the renewal of intercourse with my old and highly-valued friends Bishop and Mrs Gobat. A dozen of years had elapsed since we last met, and during that time he had been raised to the bench of bishops; but I found him unchanged, except in the title bestowed upon him and in the apron he wore. He was the same warm-hearted friend, the same zealous, earnest missionary as in former days. No sooner were they aware of my arrival than they sent to press me to take up my abode in their house; but though with the 'following' I had, such an infliction was not to be thought of, my evenings were usually spent under their hospitable roof. He assured me how glad he would have been that I should preach for him had the church on Mount Zion been altogether under his own control; but as that is not the case, he showed his catholic spirit by inviting me to conduct worship at the private prayer meetings and other gatherings of the British residents in his own house; and afforded me besides an opportunity of addressing a public prayer-meeting on the progress of evangelical truth in Italy.

Reference has already been made to the bishop's labours, and to the success which, by God's blessing, has attended them among the adult natives, in the brief notices which have been given of the Eastern Churches, and it is unnecessary further to enlarge on that subject. But any account of the good which he is quietly effecting would be very incomplete without some mention of the schools which he has established. In company with Mrs Gobat, I went to visit the two which exist in Jerusalem. The one for girls was conducted by an English lady, and contained, at the time of my visit, about fifteen pupils, some Jewesses, some the children of Jewish converts, and

others of Arab Christians. The English language is made the basis of instruction, but both the Hebrew and Arabic languages are also used. As a natural consequence, the progress made is slow at first, till the language in which the general education is to be given has been acquired; but the after benefits amply compensate for this drawback. They all read English well; and it was pleasant to hear our sweet English hymns on the lips of the young children of Palestine. I examined them on several portions of the New Testament, and found, by the ready and intelligent answers which were given, that their training was most carefully attended to. From thence we repaired to the boys' school, at which there were about forty scholars under the superintendence of three masters, an Englishman, a German, and an Arab who had been educated in the American Institution at Beyrout. English and Arabic are the two languages used in this school. When we entered, the boys were in the geographical class, which was taught in Arabic, and from the rapidity and correctness with which they pointed out the places I suggested to them through the master, it was evident that they had made very satisfactory proficiency. I examined them afterwards in portions of the New Testament, and found their acquaintance with its history very creditable. The system of class schools has been discarded with the happiest result; Jews, Christians, and Mohammedans, all meet together and receive the same education, and the effect will no doubt tell most beneficially on the next generation. We next visited the Prussian hospital and hospice for the reception of the poorer subjects of that kingdom who visit Jerusalem. They are supported by the Prussian Government, and managed by three Deaconesses or Protestant Sisters of Charity, modest, pious, and self-denying persons. The hospital is open for the reception of any of the Arabs who choose to avail themselves of it, and several were there at the time of our visit. These Deaconesses dry the wild flowers gathered from the localities around, which are associated with our most sacred recollections; and sell the wreaths, pasted on sheets of paper, for the benefit of their institution. A more delightful souvenir of Jerusalem and its environs it is scarcely possible to put into the hands of friends, than the wild flowers thus prepared. I brought away a number of these papers, and have invariably found them greatly prized.

The only Protestant religious body which now has a mission at Jerusalem is the London Jewish Society. The Rev. Mr Nicolayson, 'whose praise is in all the churches,' is at its head. He has been now

for upwards of 23 years a missionary in Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> The only clerical colleague he had when I was there was the Rev. Mr Crawford, a man of the same single heart and Christian zeal with himself. Besides these, there were several laymen attached to the mission. Chief among them is Dr Macgown, who is at the head of the hospital department, and Dr Sim and Mr Colman, who are his assistants. There are some tradesmen also who have been engaged for the purpose of instructing the Jewish converts in the various departments of industry and handicraft. There is an institution in which these converts are boarded and receive instruction, and their number, at the time of which I write, was about thirty.<sup>2</sup> The only drawback, in my estimation, to the mission is one which, from the state of matters at Jerusalem, is almost inevitable, namely, that there is no way of making trial of a convert's sincerity before his admission into the institution, or at least before he becomes a burden on the charity of the mission. The Jews live on the charity of their brethren in Europe; the Christians on the funds dispensed by the convents. There is no trade by which a man can earn his own livelihood; and when a Jew professes himself a Christian, the support he receives from the Rabbis is at once withdrawn, so that the missionaries have but one alternative, to let him starve or to admit him to the institution. On the whole, those who have been admitted have, I believe, turned out well; but where a man is at least as well off as before, if he has not actually bettered his condition by the change, there is always ground for suspicion regarding the motive which has led to it. Nothing is further from my thoughts than to cast a suspicion in the way the establishment is managed; it is the principle only of giving support to every convert, that I deem faulty, and because it is in some degree inevitable. I should be sorry to see either my own church or the Established Church of Scotland fix at present on Jerusalem as a mission station among the Jews.

<sup>1</sup> Since the above was written accounts have been received of his lamented death.

<sup>2</sup> While I was in Jerusalem, the resident master of this institution, a pretended convert, was dismissed on account of charges affecting his moral character. This proceeding gave rise to an unfortunate misunderstanding among the members of the Mission, which, I have since learned with deep regret, has been productive of much mischief. There is, perhaps unconsciously, a national jealousy between the German and English elements in the mission, which not only accounts for the present *hitch*, but which, from the pre-eminently absurd foundation on which the Bishopric is laid, will develop with every new successor to the see. The German element will be depressed while there is an English bishop, and *vice versa*.

The hospital for the treatment of diseased Jews, established by the Jewish Society, is a most admirable institution, and has been productive of incalculable benefit. The cleanliness and order which pervade it reflect the highest credit on the able and accomplished physician who is at its head. I had frequently an opportunity of going through its wards, and found on an average from a dozen to twenty patients, both male and female, accommodated there. It is exclusively confined to the Jews, and all the inferior staff connected with it belong to the same persuasion. The veneration and affection which servants and patients alike exhibit for Dr Macgown were most gratifying to behold. Twice every week he and Dr Sim gave advice gratis to all who attended at the hospital; and the crowds on these occasions—after making allowance for disease engendered by poverty and bad food—led one to form a very unfavourable idea of the sanitary condition of Jerusalem. The medical skill of these gentlemen is highly appreciated by the Mohammedans as well as by the Jews. I have already mentioned the access which they obtained on this account to the house of the Sheikh el Harám, but there are few of the Effendis who have not also sought their advice for themselves or their families.

I have frequently, during the course of this chapter, had occasion to refer to Dr Barclay, and shall have again in some of the excursions round Jerusalem. Through the kindness of my countryman Dr Sim, I was introduced to him soon after my arrival, and received much kindness from him and from all the members of his family. He was a medical missionary of the Baptist Church in America, and had been upwards of four years established in Jerusalem. He spoke Arabic fluently; and having a very decided turn for topography and archæology, he had employed to good purpose all his leisure time, in making a careful study of the city, and of every point of interest around. He had constructed a map including a district of seven miles round the city, and had taken photographic views of all the most interesting objects, with a view to publication. The manner in which he obtained free access to the mosque enclosure has been already mentioned. I had the pleasure of seeing him at Leghorn a few months after when on his way to America to publish the result of his investigations. His daughter, who draws and paints beautifully, had executed a panorama of Jerusalem, besides many separate drawings of the more remarkable objects it contains. She had also accomplished a feat which at that time no foreign lady had ever done. Being intimate with the families of the Effendis, and speaking Arabic with ease, they dressed her up as a Turkish lady, and took her with them into the

mosques of Sakhara and el Aksa; and from her I received some sprigs of cypress which she had plucked within the enclosure, and brought away as a memorial of her visit. One day when I was at their house, a Mohammedan boy, twelve years old, came in to pay them a visit; and as he was announced Mrs Barclay whispered, 'this is the young husband.' Considerably astonished, I asked if she meant he was *betrothed*, and was told that they had all been invited to attend his marriage about a fortnight before, to a girl of ten years of age, and that they were now living together as man and wife! They added, moreover, that such early marriages were commonly practised among the Mohammedans.

Judging from what fell under my own observation, I should consider the climate of Jerusalem an exceedingly bad one. During the month I remained there we had only eight fair days. Rain and hail, with high cold winds, prevailed all the rest of the time, and we had two snow storms, each of which covered the ground to the depth of a foot. I was obliged to give up several excursions to a distance, as it would have been utterly impossible to live in a tent while such torrents of water were falling incessantly; indeed, had I followed the example of some other travellers, I should scarcely ever have left the hotel. Being determined, however, to make the best use of my time, after returning drenched from my daily walk or ride, my clothes were dried at a stove to be ready for another drenching on the morrow. It was said that snow had not fallen for four years previously, and that more rain fell that year than usual; but lying as Jerusalem does, at the height of nearly 3000 feet above the level of the Mediterranean, and exposed to the westerly winds, there must always be a considerable fall of rain in the early spring; and the effects of such floods soaking into the heaps of filth with which the streets abound, and drawn out again in poisonous miasma by the heat of the sun, may well be conceived to be most injurious to health. Accordingly I found that few who had resided there any length of time had escaped the pernicious effects of fever and ague. During the heat of summer the town becomes so unhealthy that the Europeans are obliged to remove to a distance from it, and selecting some grove of olive trees, to pitch their tents and live under canvass.

Along with beads, mother of pearl shells, work-boxes, and paper cutters made of olive wood from the Mount of Olives, I was fortunate enough to purchase in Jerusalem two or three ancient gems, and a genuine silver shekel. A brisk manufacture of this coin is carried on in Jerusalem for the benefit of travellers, and it is no easy matter to

secure a genuine one. The dealers in curiosities, who daily crowded round the breakfast table, brought many of them, and tried hard to drive a bargain, but as Mr Reichardt, one of the missionaries, whose numismatic skill was great, had warned me before hand, I took them all to him, and after the rejection of half a dozen false ones a genuine shekel was at last secured. A place more completely destitute of nick-nacks, which a traveller would like to carry away to present to friends, I never saw. To this cause I presume must be attributed the presentation of one of the oddest souvenirs it is possible to imagine, the relation of which quite gravely by the lady donor sorely tried my risible faculties. A worthy shoemaker in England, hearing she was going to Jerusalem, begged to present her with a pair of boots to be worn there. Worn they were till they were no longer serviceable, when the bright idea occurred to the wearer of sending them back to the shoemaker to be preserved as relics of the holy places! Among the living curiosities of Jerusalem I must not omit to mention an American who had once been a Christian, but had afterwards apostatized to Judaism, and on the principle of doing in Jerusalem as the Jews do, had divorced his Christian wife and married a young Jewess. It is the only instance I ever heard of such retrogradation, and naturally leads to the speculation whether he is to be classed in the category of knave or fool. His intention, when first announced, must have taken the rabbis exceedingly by surprise, as creating a new era in the history of modern Judaism, and it is not therefore to be wondered at that they should wear him as a feather in their caps.

Another curious speculation was awakened in my mind as to what could be the motives that induce some travellers to come to Jerusalem. During the last fortnight of my residence there, two young English officers arrived at sundown on a Friday night. After the fatigues of the journey through the short Desert, they rose late next day, chattered with the beadsmen and *antique*-mongers, went to the bank for money, arranged with a Sheikh to take them to the Jordan the following morning, and about one o'clock set out to visit Jerusalem. By dinner time they had 'checked it off,' to use an American phrase. Next morning they set out for the Jordan, returned on Sunday night, and started for Beyrout on Monday morning! This *veni, vidi, vici* style of going to work, which is not at all uncommon with travellers, suggested the inquiry, what possible object they could have in coming there? They had seen nothing; they had scarcely time to fix the general features of the city in their memory; and it therefore



seemed, as a tour to Palestine was at that time *the fashion* with a certain class of tourists, as if their only object was to be able to brag on their return that they were not behind the age, for they had visited Jerusalem.

During the night there are watchmen stationed at the corner of some of the streets, provided with a lantern and a club or short spear, I am not sure which. They might as well be in their beds, so far as the safety of the city is concerned, for they lay themselves down under some arch or projecting lattice, on the driest spot to be found, as soon as they come upon their beats, and never seem to rise from them till morning. Such there were in the ancient Jerusalem, and to them the Lord compares a corrupt ministry in these words, which always suggested themselves as I passed, 'His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber.'—Is. lvi. 10.

The frequent familiar mention of places with which from earliest youth we have been accustomed to associate all our most reverential ideas, produces at first a strange and somewhat painful impression. A ride to Anathoth—a walk to Aceldama—a pic-nic to the cave of Adullam, are sounds which at first are apt both to startle and to shock the ear of a new arrival, but one speedily grows familiar with them. A very generally entertained opinion is, that a pilgrimage to these sacred spots cannot fail to increase one's devotion. In my own case I frankly confess that such was not the case. There was something in the disputes which have arisen regarding many of the localities, and in the strange contrast between others as imagination had pictured them and as the reality revealed them, which for the moment disturbed rather than increased my devotional feelings. The outward and material necessarily engrossed so much of the attention as to interfere with spiritual meditation; and it was only after I had left Jerusalem, with all these localities well impressed upon the memory, and had quietly and leisurely transferred the ideas and meditations hitherto grouped around an imaginary locality to the real one, that I was able to appreciate the benefit, in a spiritual point of view, which I had derived from the visit. On comparing notes with others who have been there, I found that their experience coincided very much with my own. The primary feeling regarding Palestine is one of surprise, bordering upon disappointment, that a country which has bulked so largely in our eyes from infancy, and which has been the theatre of events that have revolutionised the world, should be so limited in extent. The subsequent one is admiration of the wisdom

of that God who often chooses 'the weak things of this world to confound the things that are mighty,' who works out His purposes by the most unlikely instruments, and 'whose thoughts are higher than our thoughts.' I ought to make an exception in favour of one locality. I never took my favourite walk along that quite unfrequented path which leads hard by the summit of the Mount of Olives to Bethany, without being able to realize the Saviour's walks along it with His disciples, His ascension in its immediate vicinity, and that strange joy with which the disciples returned to the city after their Master had been taken away from them. There, at least, we are free both from tradition and dispute, and with the Bible in our hands we can follow with certainty the earthly footsteps of our Divine Redeemer.

In comparison with the population of Jerusalem during the continuance of the dynasty of David, or at the time of its capture by the Romans, as given by Josephus, the number of its present inhabitants given above—which many believe to be considerably exaggerated—proves how great has been its reverse of fortune. A walk through its streets, or a ride round its walls, will force on the most unobservant the conviction that it is now a desolate and melancholy city. The voice of the tabret and the pipe I have heard in it, indeed, in passing along its streets at night; but these sounds of rejoicing came from the dwellings of 'the sons of the alien' and not from the habitations of the seed of Abraham. Except the slumbering watchman who lies at the corner of the street, and the growling dogs who are scared by the light of your lantern, scarce a living being is to be seen abroad after nightfall. During the day you look in vain for any signs of commerce. A camel or two loaded with corn, and a handful of peasant women with baskets of vegetables on their heads, are all who now bear traffic to her markets; and if perchance you have extended your ride too far and are returning at a gallop to reach the gates before sunset, you are sure to meet, a mile or two on their homeward journey, the last stragglers who have issued from the gates; and as you approach the walls you find that the stillness of death has settled down upon the city, and that not a human being is in view. How true the picture drawn by the prophet, 'Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation. Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned up with fire: and all our pleasant things are laid waste.'—Isaiah lxiv. 10, 11.

## CHAPTER IX.

## EXCURSIONS ROUND JERUSALEM.

ON my arrival at El Khuds, I met at last the travellers whom I had followed so long through the Desert, but though gentlemanly and pleasant men, they belonged to the class who come to Palestine because a journey there is '*the proper thing*' just at present, rather than from any interest which they feel in its history, past, present, or future; and I therefore reckoned it rather a fortunate circumstance that I had not overtaken them earlier, as I should probably have proved a *bore* to them, and they might have disagreeably curtailed my liberty in hunting after objects interesting to me. The only other travellers who were in Jerusalem when I reached it, were Mr and Mrs Tobin from the county of Cork, and their friend Miss Chesney, daughter of General Chesney, the explorer of the Euphrates. As Mr Tobin was confined to his hotel (Antonio's) from severe illness during his stay in Jerusalem, the ladies of his party who must otherwise have been deprived of the opportunity of visiting the country around, often joined Mr Graham, Dr Sim, and myself, in our rides, and added much to the pleasure which these afforded us. After Mr Tobin's recovery, I often met them again in other parts of Syria, and had the pleasure of being their fellow-passenger as far as Smyrna on my return. This chapter is to be devoted to excursions round Jerusalem, and we shall begin with those in its immediate neighbourhood.

There is, at the distance of 700 yards outside the Yaffa Gate, a large ancient reservoir, now called Birket el Mamilla, from a church dedicated to St Mamilla which once stood in its neighbourhood. It is situated at the very head of the valley of the Son of Hinnom; is 316 feet in length, 218 in breadth, and 18 in depth. During all the time I was in Jerusalem this pool was full to overflowing. An aqueduct leads directly to it from the Pool of Hezekiah, within the city; and it has generally been supposed to be the fountain of Gihon, 'the Upper Pool,' whose waters, before Hezekiah diverted them from their

original course, would naturally follow the descent of the valley to another pool below, which in Scripture is called 'the Lower Pool.' It is also certain that Birket Mamilla is also the pool which Josephus calls 'the Serpents' Pool,' beside which was the sepulchre of the Herodian family.<sup>1</sup> Taking the sacred text as our guide, this is the only place in the neighbourhood of the city now that answers the description given in it. Mr Williams' theory has been already referred to, by which the upper pool is placed to the NE. of the city, and the lower identified with Siloam, and Hezekiah's conduit made to run through the wide valley which lies between the two hills on which the city is built; but as there is no dispute about the situation of the city of David, and as it is expressly stated that this conduit was brought 'straight down to the *west side of the city of David*' (2 Chron. xxxii. 30), that theory is perfectly untenable. I found that Dr Barclay also rejects the idea that these pools in the valley of Hinnom are the pools of Gihon. He considers that the latter must have been to the north of Jerusalem, beyond the Damascus Gate; and that Hezekiah's conduit ran down from thence along the western wall until it fell into the pool within the city, which still bears his name. The large reservoirs in the valley of Hinnom he attributes to Solomon; and supposes him to have constructed them for the reception of the water from the pools he had made at El Burák. In proof of this, he assured me that he had traced the ancient aqueduct of Solomon,—part of which is visible above the ground between Bethlehem and Jerusalem—all the way from Solomon's pools to the uppermost of these reservoirs. This is a most valuable discovery as fixing the existence of this pool, at least as far back as the time of Solomon; and in the absence of anything like a pool to the north of Jerusalem (for the little cistern within a few yards of the Damascus Gate, on which De Sauley fixes as the pool of Gihon, is too contemptible to be taken seriously into consideration), I am all the more inclined, in consequence of it, to believe that this reservoir is the upper pool of Gihon. We have undoubted evidence that Gihon existed before Solomon's time, for he was proclaimed king by its side; and to the pool thus made ready to his hand, he would naturally direct the supply of water which he had procured in the valley of Etham. Around this reservoir there is a very large Mohammedan cemetery, and at a few paces distant from it are the ruins of

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. v. cap. 3, compared with Lib. iv. cap. 12, where Herod's monument is expressly placed to the west of Titus' camp, which was at the north-west angle of the walls.

some large tombs, which Dr Barclay believes to be the monument of Herod, where the members of his family were buried.

Proceeding down the valley of the Son of Hinnom, a rising ground, now covered with vineyards, presents itself on the right, at a short distance from the pool, on which, according to Josephus, the village of the Terebinth<sup>1</sup> or Chickpea once stood, by which the wall of Titus passed, and some faint traces of which are still discoverable. The lower pool of Gihon lies considerably further down the valley, where the road from Bethlehem and Hebron descends into it, and is now called Birket es Sultán. Its length is 592 feet, its greatest breadth 275 feet, and its greatest depth 42 feet. It has been formed by throwing very strong walls across the valley, and then excavating the soil till the bare rock was reached. The position which this pool occupies in relation to the upper one, adds still further probability that these are the pools of Gihon;—and if so, that part of the valley which lies between the two, must have been ‘the fuller’s field’ (Isa. xxxvi. 2), the place from whence the Assyrian General addressed the men on the wall. That this pool is the one mentioned by Nehemiah in connection with the sepulchres of David cannot I think be doubted, because to this day the mosque of the tomb of David is kept with religious care on the hill of Zion just above it.—Neh. iii. 16. Along the southern embankment of this lower pool a Saracenic aqueduct is carried across the valley, from the pools of Solomon to the mosque, which is said to be identical with one built by Pontius Pilate for conveying water to the temple.<sup>2</sup> On the hill of Zion to the right, probably about 100 feet above the pool is the pretty little English cemetery, in which lie the remains of the first Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, without a stone or a line to indicate his last resting place. Bishop Gobat accompanied me on my first visit to the cemetery, and besides pointing out his predecessor’s grave and an ancient staircase cut out in the rock, which he supposes may possibly be that mentioned by Nehemiah, as ‘the stairs that go down from the city of David,’<sup>3</sup> he took me over the commodious school-rooms, which he was building just within its walls. A capital idea! for the place being British property, he will thus secure accommodation for his schools, without fear or favour of the Moslems.

<sup>1</sup> Josephus, *Bel. Jud.* Lib. v. cap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Williams’ *Holy City*, vol. ii. p. 561.

<sup>3</sup> Neh. iii. 15. From the context, I suspect the stairs mentioned in that passage must have been much nearer the pool of Siloam.

From the Birket es Sultán the valley becomes steeper and narrower in its descent, till it joins the valley of Jehoshaphat. At its lower extremity is Tophet, where the Jews practised their idolatrous rites, and made their children pass through the fire to Molech—a tradition of which is no doubt kept up in the modern name, for the Arabs to this day call it Wadi Gehenna, or ‘the Valley of Hell.’ According to the careful measurement of Dr Robinson, the entire length of this valley from the upper pool to its junction with that of Jehoshaphat, is 6772 English feet, or a little more than one English statute mile and a quarter. Instead of pursuing the path that leads down the valley, on one of my visits to it, Dr Sim, Mr Calman, and I, ascended the hill of Evil Counsel, which forms its right bank, rising a little below the lower pool. This hill is so called from the tradition already mentioned that the country house of the High Priest Ananias was situated upon it, and that there the traitor Judas made his covenant with the priests to betray his Master for thirty pieces of silver. By the side of this house there stands a solitary tree, on which monkish tradition affirms that Judas hanged himself. It was on this hill, Josephus informs us, that Pompey pitched his tent when he came against Jerusalem to the assistance of Herod.

In the face of this hill, from the pool just mentioned to the end of the valley, there are innumerable sepulchres excavated in the rock. Among them there was one bearing a Greek inscription, intimating that a number of Germans were buried there. De Sauley gives it in his book; and on examining the letters, we found that he had taken the liberty of passing a chisel over them to enable him to make them out. The only other which had an inscription, so far as we observed, bore these three words, which were perfectly legible, *ΤΗC ΑΓΙΑC CΙΩΝ* ‘of the holy Zion.’ One of these tombs must have been used at a later period as a Greek chapel, for the division between the first and second chambers had been cut away, and the painted heads of two apostles or saints, with ‘glories’ round them, are still visible upon the ceiling. Many of them still contain the skulls, bones, and dust of men who have been laid to rest there; indeed the practice of burying in these ancient sepulchres is still of frequent occurrence, for in the valley of Jehoshaphat I came on several in which bodies had been lately deposited. Moving eastward along the hill, we come to Acladama (invariably pronounced in the vicinity Akeldama), ‘the potter’s field,’ which, up to a comparatively recent period, was still used for the purpose for which it was originally purchased with ‘the price of innocent blood,’ namely, to bury strangers in. Besides the tradition that

fixes it in what was manifestly the fashionable necropolis of Jerusalem, Mr Williams mentions an interesting fact communicated to him by Dr Schultz, the former Prussian Consul, that 'it is authenticated as the potter's field by a bed of white clay still worked.' None of our party observed this. There is one large construction with an arched roof, and with walls about fifteen feet above the ground, but double that amount below the surface. There are no stairs nor means of descent to it; and it is not improbable that this was the *Morgue* or charnel-house into which the bodies of strangers dying at Jerusalem were cast. A large collection of bones was in it when we visited it. The arch and one side of the building seem to be modern; the other side is built with bevelled stones and pilasters, executed in the Jewish style. Still nearer the eastern end of the valley, we came upon the only tomb which bears outward traces of elaborate workmanship. The pediment was ornamented with wreaths and other designs, and a triangular ornament or pyramid was cut in the face of the rock above the door. With difficulty we crept on all fours through the narrow opening, and found ourselves in a large hall, in the sides of which there were six doors, with a pilaster between each. These led into chambers, around which there were numerous niches for the reception of the dead; and the multitude of bones and skulls which they contain might well justify Dr Barclay in fixing on this as the real Akeldama. I am inclined, however, to prefer the large *Morgue* already mentioned, because, in the first place, it is doubtful whether the priests would be disposed, or 'the thirty pieces of silver' be sufficient to buy so expensive a place for the interment of strangers; and next because Josephus, in describing Titus' work of circumvallation, expressly mentions 'the monument of Ananias, the high priest,'<sup>1</sup> the father-in-law of Caiaphas, as existing in this quarter; and this elegant sepulchre seems much more likely to have belonged to him. Along that part of the hill of Evil Counsel, which lies just above Tophet, there are frequent traces of a wall of Roman workmanship, which I think must be portions of the one built by the army of Titus in an incredibly short period, to prevent any relief from reaching the besieged city as well as to hinder the escape of those who were shut up within. That wall began at Titus' head quarters, beside the Tower of Psephinus, a little beyond the north west angle of the walls. It ran along the northern side of the city, crossed the valley of Jehoshaphat, was continued along the base of the Mount of Olives and of the neighbouring Mount of Offence;

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud., Lib. v. cap. 12.

then crossing the valley of Jehoshaphat again where the Valley Ben Hinnom joins it, it was carried along the side of the hill of Evil Counsel to the village of the house of the Terebinth, then to the monument of Herod at the Upper Pool, and thence to the camp of Titus.<sup>1</sup>

Descending into the valley, and crossing it where the Hill of Ophel juts out in a rocky promontory, we found in a bay or recess formed by the junction of the Tyropæon valley with it, another ancient and well-known pool, bearing the name of Birket Selwán, which is none other than

——— ‘Siloa’s brook, that flowed  
Fast by the oracle of God.’

It measures 53 feet in length, 18 feet in breadth, and 19 in depth. Its sides are built of hewn stones, and one is supported by pilasters of a kind of marble found in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, of a tawny yellow colour, interspersed with veins of red. A flight of steps at one of the angles gives access to the waters of the pool. From this, the water is drawn off through a conduit cut in the rock to supply a fountain and gardens farther down. Descending by a few steps into a narrow chamber immediately behind this pool, we came to the fountain which supplies it; but which by exploration Dr Robinson found to be itself supplied from the Pool of the Virgin, in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, by means of a tunnel cut through the Hill of Ophel. It is probable that this little chamber, which is in fact the end of the tunnel, was walled up in ancient days, and that the people obtained their supply of water from the pool alone, which in that case would account for its being spoken of both as a fountain and a pool. The waters have a sweetish insipid taste, which it is not easy to describe. A little farther down the Valley of Hinnom, beside the mulberry tree, which tradition points out as the scene of Isaiah’s martyrdom, there are clear traces of another and larger pool which has evidently been supplied from this source. It is now nearly filled up with earth, and the interior is cultivated as a garden; but its form and the strong artificial dam which originally retained its waters, remain unchanged to the present day. May not the smaller pool, which now receives the water, have been, as already suggested, the fountain, and the larger one the Pool of Siloam? There are but a few hundred feet between them. Although the present pool is not far distant from the king’s gardens, yet this latter pool is so close to them, that I think it must be that to which Nehemiah refers as ‘the Pool of Siloah by the king’s garden.’—Neh. iii. 15. In that case, the south-east angle of the outer walls of

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. v. cap. 12.



Jerusalem would be on the rocky promontory of Ophel immediately above, and there stood 'the tower in Siloam,' which fell in our Lord's day, causing destruction to some who were in the valley beneath. It was to wash in this pool that our Lord sent the man born blind, who was afterwards cast out of the synagogue for maintaining that one who could work such a miracle as restoring sight to the blind must be commissioned from heaven.

The only occasion on which I met with annoyance from a native was at this pool. Having waded down one day in the midst of deep snow, to show it to the Rev. Mr Sampson, a rector of the Irish church near Londonderry, an Arab from the village of Selwán watched us enter the little chamber above the pool, and then stopped up the egress, demanding backshish. *Mafeesh backshish* was the immediate reply, whereupon he raised above his head a short axe he carried, and threatened to make a cut at us, still demanding backshish. We were both unarmed. I raised my umbrella, prepared to strike in return; Mr Sampson put his hand into his breast, as if he had a pistol there, and thus we stood for about a couple of minutes facing one another, while the demands for backshish become more fierce. At last, finding that we were not to be intimidated, and judging probably that with two against him he would have the worst of it if we came to blows, he slunk off very sheepishly, and we went on our way without further molestation. The water from the Birket Selwán is brought by a narrow channel cut in the rock to a trough at the foot of the valley of Hinnom, a little to the north of the ruined pool just mentioned, and from thence it is conveyed into the gardens which still occupy the lower part of the valley of Jehoshaphat, and are the humble modern representatives of 'the king's gardens.' A gate in the ancient wall opened to the country somewhere in this neighbourhood; and by it King Zedekiah and some of his men of war, when Nebuchadnezzar's army had taken Jerusalem, made their escape and fled towards Jericho, being however overtaken in the plain.—2 Kings xxv. 4.

A little below these gardens, which are at the junction of the valleys, is a well called Bir Ayub, 'the Well of Joab,' and also 'the Well of Nehemiah.' It is 125 feet deep; the lower portion being cut in the solid rock, and the upper built up with ancient masonry. It is roofed in, and seems at one time to have been worked by a water-wheel. This well is the mainstay of the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and when the supply in the pools and in the cisterns attached to their houses fail, they send down here for water. There can be little room to doubt that this is the En Rogel of which frequent mention is made in Scrip-

ture. It is named, along with other fountains to be afterwards noticed, as one of the boundary marks between the territories of Judah and Benjamin; and we know that the boundary line ran up the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, placing Jerusalem within the territory of the latter tribe. Its connection with the name of Joab arose probably from the last public act of that turbulent warrior. In the latter days of David, having espoused the cause of Adonijah in his attempt to seize the kingdom, Joab brought him to En Rogel and there proclaimed him king; and it was while feasting there that the evil tidings reached them that at the other end of the same valley, by the Pool of Gihon, his brother Solomon had been proclaimed king by David's command. This well is also famous as the *rendezvous* given to Ahimaaz and Jonathan, the sons of the priests, by David's adherents within the city, during the usurpation of Absalom. Its waters are not supplied by a perennial spring, for in years of great drought they fail as well as the other pools and wells around. There is therefore strong probability that the surplus waters from the wells and cisterns on the temple plateau are conducted to it by a subterranean channel. During the latter rains in the months of February and March, the Well En Rogel is a subject of much speculation and interest to all the dwellers in the city. If it overflows and discharges its surplus waters down the Wadi el Nahr (Valley of Fire) then they are certain that they will have abundance of water during the summer; if there is no overflow, their minds are filled with forebodings.

So abundant were the rains during the time I was in Jerusalem, that the Ain Ayub overflowed for nearly a week, and sent a copious stream down the wadi. The water did not issue from the well's mouth, but from a small hole at the corner of what I suspect is a covered reservoir, about fifty or sixty feet lower down the valley than the well. The neighbourhood presented the appearance of a jubilee in consequence. Despite the rain the people flocked in holiday attire to the well. The coffee-house keepers had brought down an unlimited supply of stools, chibouks, nargilehs, and coffee, and groups were seated, some with their feet actually in the water, smoking, chattering, and watching the stream, which proclaimed that for one summer at least there would be a sufficiency of water in the land. This stream, which flowed down the valley from the well, was the lower Kedron; but that year the upper Kedron, in the middle section of the Valley of Jehoshaphat also flowed for a day or two, an event of such rare occurrence that the Literary Society, which meets weekly at Mr Finn's house, deemed it of sufficient consequence to register it.

Some excitement was occasioned a few years ago, by an announcement that the latter rains, which had been unknown in Palestine for ages, had, in the good providence of God, made their appearance again. I have every reason to believe from careful inquiries on the spot, that the early and latter rains visit Palestine annually in common with the countries around, though probably not in such abundance now as when God smiled upon the land for His people's sake. The early rains are irregular, but generally take place at the breaking up of the dry season in October or November, and the latter rains occur in spring, in the months of February or of March, preparing for an abundant harvest by 'clear shining after rain.'

Before leaving the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, it will save another reference to the localities on the southern side of Jerusalem, if we retrace our steps to the Lower Pool of Gihon, and from thence ascend the steep side of Mount Zion. We shall thus reach the Mosque of Nebi Daoud, on the summit, which is about a couple of hundred yards outside the gate of the same name; and not far from the English burying-ground. Next to the Great Mosque it is reckoned one of the most sacred places in Jerusalem by the Mohammedans. It is the sepulchre of King David. It is also fixed on by tradition as 'the Upper Room' in which our Lord instituted the Last Supper; and the place where the apostles afterwards met for worship, and where the Pentecostal effusion of the Holy Spirit took place. A Christian Church occupied the site as early as the fourth century, and this tradition seems to have been in existence even then; but if there be any truth in the supposition that this is the sepulchre of the kings of Judah, it must be rejected, because it is inconceivable that a house should have stood on the site of the royal tomb, which was well known in the apostles' days; or that Peter should have spoken of it in the terms he did, if he was then actually standing above the spot.—Acts ii. 29. From the notices which we have in Scripture of the tombs of the kings of David's house, it is exceedingly probable that the Mohammedan tradition, in which both Jews and Christians agree, is the correct one. There can be no doubt that the sepulchre of David was on Mount Zion, within the city of David (1 Kings ii. 10); and in speaking of the pool below, a passage has been already quoted from Nehemiah (Neh. iii. 16), which so well agrees with the Mosque of Nebi Daoud, that the identity of the two places may be reckoned nearly a matter of certainty. We know from Josephus<sup>1</sup> that both Hyrcanus,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant., Lib. vii., cap. 15; Lib. xiii., cap. 8; and Lib. xvi., cap. 7.

the high priest of the Asmonean dynasty, and Herod the Great, opened the tomb of David, from which the former took 3000 talents, and the latter the gold and silver which lined its walls and pillars; but after the destruction of Jerusalem there seems no trace of it till the days of Benjamin of Tudela, towards the end of the twelfth century, who heard from a Rabbi Abraham, then living in Jerusalem, that it had been accidentally discovered by two workmen; and that he had actually been within it, and had seen the tombs of David and Solomon.<sup>1</sup> Since then the place has been known as the sepulchre of David, though its fame as the fabulous Cœnaculum has diverted the attention of those who live in the faith of ecclesiastical traditions from its more interesting, because more authentic and ancient destination.

Being reckoned one of the Moslem sacred places, it is very difficult to get admittance to it; and two or three times as I passed near it, the friends with whom I was walking dissuaded me from the attempt. One afternoon, however, as Mr Sampson and I were passing, finding no one in the gateway nor in the court within, we walked boldly in, and ascending a broad outside staircase, entered a spacious chamber, about sixty feet long, which, from the *Milwab* in the southern wall, pointing out the Kibleh or direction of Mecca, we were sure must be a mosque. This is the apartment which is regarded as the Cœnaculum, or 'Upper Chamber.' We were soon surrounded by a rabble of boys demanding backshish, and shortly after an Arab came in, who, pointing to a winding staircase in the south-west angle of the chamber, which led down into a vault below, informed us that that was the Turbet Nebi Daoud. The door at the bottom had an open grating in the middle, through which it was possible to get a view into the vaults; and I was quietly descending for this purpose, when the man thundered forth a prohibition with prodigious energy. Finding that even a backshish would not tempt him, we retired, glad that we had been able to see even so much of the place. We gave a few paras in backshish to the boys at the gateway, and got stoned and abused as Christian dogs by those who were disappointed in the distribution. De Sauley labours hard to prove that the sepulchre of David is identical with 'the tombs of the kings,' on the north side of the city; but the weight of his arguments may be judged of from the simple enunciation of them. The first is that, according to Josephus, Hyrcanus the high priest bribed Antiochus Eusebes to raise the siege of Jerusalem, by promising him

<sup>1</sup> For the story see Williams' Holy City. vol. ii., p. 510.

500 talents, of which he paid 300 on the instant, and left the other 200 to be paid afterwards. That was because the sepulchre of David, from whence he took 3000 talents, was without the wall of the city, says the ingenious member of the French Institute; for had it been otherwise, would Hyrcanus have been guilty of so shabby a trick as not to have paid the whole 500 talents at once? What a marvellously conclusive argument! The only other one is still more startling; for he insists that the city of David means the whole city of Jerusalem; but even then he forgets that the Scriptures and Josephus both declare, that David was buried *within* the city, while he is doing his utmost to prove that he was buried without. In the immediate neighbourhood of the Mosque Nebi Daoud is a small Armenian convent, already referred to as being the traditional house of Caiaphas, where our Lord was condemned by the Sanhedrim, and which bears to this day the name of *Habs el Messih*, 'the Prison of Messiah.'

Returning anew to the Well of En Rogel, let us now follow the course of the Valley of Jehoshaphat to the north. Passing once more by the king's gardens at its lower extremity, we have the Mount of Offence on the right hand, and Ophel, where the Nethinims and other servants of the temple had their habitations, on the left. The valley is much narrower, and the path along its bottom more rough and uneven here than in any other part of its course. Among the perpendicular rocks to the right, forming the base of the northern part of the Mount of Offence, is the village of Selwán or Siloam, which consists almost entirely of ancient rock tombs, now occupied by an Arab population who bear but an indifferent character. Nearly opposite this village, in the side of Ophel, is the Fountain of the Virgin, called by the natives Aïn Umed Deraj, 'the Mother of Steps,' from a flight of 26 steps by which we descend to the waters. It is supposed by many to be 'the King's Pool,' mentioned by Nehemiah in his night ride round the ruins of Jerusalem. It is situated in a deep cleft in the rock, the level of the water being about fifteen feet below that of the valley. The basin is about fifteen feet in length by six in width, and the height of the natural arch about six feet. There is a curious circumstance connected with the water of this pool, which I witnessed on several occasions, viz., that it is intermittent in its flow, sometimes suddenly rising for a foot or more above its ordinary level and then declining again. This led Dr Robinson to suppose that we must seek in it for the Pool of Bethesda. From whence these waters come is still undetermined. Some suppose that there is a natural spring in the basin, others that 'the fountain' is only an opening in

the great subterranean canal, by which the surplus waters are discharged from the temple enclosure. Dr Robinson and Dr Smith having entered the aqueduct at the Pool of Siloam, followed it up until they emerged at the Fountain of the Virgin; thus proving conclusively that the waters of the former are derived from this source. Dr Barclay and his sons attempted the same feat in 1853, but found that several of the stones forming the roof of the channel, about midway, had fallen in since Dr Robinson's visit, and had rendered the passage impracticable. I usually carried about with me a wax candle and lucifers, to be ready for any dark bit of exploration that might present itself, and on one of my visits to this fountain, along with Mr Calman, I lighted the candle to make a thorough examination of the interior. On ascending again to the top of the stair I blew out the candle just as a woman of Siloam was coming with her skin to draw water. She began to speak in an excited tone, evidently remonstrating against something I had done, and I fancied she wished the benefit of the light to descend by; but when Mr Calman came up, he told me she was reproaching me for having blown out the light, as it was unlucky. She said that as I had lighted it, I should have left it burning to scare away the *jims* or evil genii.

Speaking of this fountain, Mr Williams considers that its waters are brought down by an aqueduct or drain from the temple above, and suggests that it was through this channel, probably, that the Fellahin surprised the mosque by night, during Ibrahim Pasha's occupation of the city, by emerging near the western wall of the enclosure. 'I have no doubt,' he says, 'that it is the termination of the drain of the great altar, whose commencement we found at the cesspool under the noble cave in the Sakhara.'<sup>1</sup> That such a communication exists between the water supplies within the Harám and the Fountain of the Virgin, I think very likely, though it has not yet been discovered. But I cannot concur with Mr Williams in supposing that this is the drain of the great altar; because a sewer has been discovered by Dr Barclay at a higher level on the Hill of Ophel, which seems to have led down straight to the Kedron from the temple. This sewer I explored along with Dr Sim and Mr Barclay. The present entrance to it is a small hole in an oliveyard below the path which leads along Ophel from the south-east angle of the Harám down to the Well of En Rogel. This sewer runs in a north-westerly direction for a considerable distance, and then turns to the north, leading apparently up to

<sup>1</sup> Williams' Holy City, vol. ii., p. 453.

the southern wall of the Harám. It is built with large stones, and carefully flagged both above and below. For about a hundred yards from the entrance its height is nearly four feet; after that the ascent becomes more steep, and the size of the drain smaller, till at the place where it turns to the north we found it so much choked up with rubbish, that had we attempted farther exploration, it must have been by lying down on our breasts and crawling along like serpents. I regret that I made this visit only the day before I left Jerusalem; for had I known of the place earlier, I should have arranged to pass a night in it, and have endeavoured to trace it to its source. The danger of being discovered and of exciting fanatical violence is always to be dreaded during the day. I have no doubt, however, that this is the great drain leading from the altar of burnt-offering, to which Mr Williams refers, and by which the Fellahin found an entrance into the mosque enclosure. It is well worthy of a visit, and perhaps from this notice some traveller may be induced to continue the survey of it, which we left unfinished. The present entrance, judging from my recollection—for I had no time to measure it—may be about 100 or 150 yards south of the south-east angle of the Harám. It is in the wall of an oliveyard to the left of the path leading down to the Bir Ayub.

Proceeding northwards from the Fountain of the Virgin, we soon came on the east side of the valley, between the Mount of Offence and the Mount of Olives, to four tombs of different shapes, two of which are monoliths with a passage excavated around them, and the other two chambers cut out of the rock. That which lies farthest south is called the tomb of Zacharias; the second is called the tomb of St James the Apostle; the next is the Pillar of Absalom; and that farthest north, the tomb of Jehoshaphat. These are so familiar to the public, both by descriptions and drawings, that a few words will suffice here concerning them. The tomb of Zacharias is in shape a low pyramid ten feet high, standing on a plinth of twenty feet, the latter ornamented with Ionic pillars and a frieze of acanthus leaves. No chamber has been discovered in it, and it is believed to be solid rock throughout. The tomb of St James consists of two chambers. The outer one which faces the Harám has an open portal, supported by pillars of the Doric order, and resembles the drawings of one of the tombs of Petra. I entered it by a small aperture from the side leading off the passage from the tomb of Zacharias, and found that the interior is now used as a pen for goats. Absalom's tomb, like that of Zacharias, is a square block hewn out of the rock to the height of twenty feet,

adorned with Ionic pillars, and ending in an architrave chased with Doric ornaments. Above the architrave, the monument is finished with masonry in the form of a cupola and spire. From the back there is an entrance into a small chamber in the body of the tomb. This monument is forty feet in height. In the face of the rock, forming the passage to this tomb, is the entrance to that of Jehoshaphat, which consists of a small square door, with a finely finished border above it, leading into a tomb cut in the rock below the level of the ground. The application to these tombs of the names they now bear is shown by Dr Robinson to have been of comparatively modern date; and, indeed, the character of the architectural ornaments on them must lead to the conclusion either that they were made by the Romans, or, more probably, were altered by them from their original form to that which they now bear.

Just opposite these tombs, where the valley is narrowest, a bridge is thrown across the dry torrent-bed, by which a path conducts up the steep face of Ophel to the end of the eastern wall of the Harám. It is evident that this part of the hill is artificial, as it is entirely composed of mould and rubbish; and if excavations could be made here, they would probably reveal the ancient foundation walls of the Temple enclosure rising from the bottom of the valley. Around the tombs just mentioned, and stretching away above them over a portion of the southern shoulder of Mount Olivet, is the Jewish burying-ground, of which mention has been already made. Continuing our walk along the Valley of Jehoshaphat, we find immediately under the Gate of St Stephen, on the lowest slope of the Mount of Olives, a square enclosure containing eight very aged olive trees, the hollow trunks of which are filled up with stones to prevent them from breaking over. This is the Garden of Gethsemane. An old Franciscan monk from the Latin convent is its *custode*, and he remains in it for a few hours every morning, except on *festa* days, for the purpose of showing it to visitors. Perhaps this enclosure was needful to prevent the trees from being carried away piece-meal by visitors, but it is no improvement. Behind it are shown, with most wonderful accuracy, the very spot where the three favoured disciples slept, and a yard or two distant, the place where the betrayer kissed his Master. Since the days of Eusebius this has been pointed out as the garden in which our blessed Lord prayed being in an agony; and I am quite ready to accept the tradition, seeing it does not run contrary to Scripture and shock common sense, as too many of the monkish legends do. Another bridge is here thrown over the Kedron, along which the road passes up



the steep hill to St Stephen's Gate. On the upper side of this bridge, and quite in the bottom of the valley, is a little church, much below the level of the road, which is built over the pretended tomb of the Virgin Mary. Robinson says, that the earliest mention of this tomb and church is in the seventh century; and from what we read in Scripture of her being taken home to his own house by the Apostle John, from the period of the crucifixion, it seems extremely doubtful whether Jerusalem was the place of her decease. In the absence of any positive information on the subject, it is more probable that it was Ephesus, which was long the sphere of St John's labours. About half way between this church and the city gate, there is a sharp angle in the road, which is now pointed out as the place of Stephen's martyrdom. The pilgrims come down here to tell their beads at the spot, and also to look for pieces of yellow marble streaked with veins of red, which they are taught to believe have been caused by his blood.

From this point the valley becomes much broader, and its bed is covered with oliveyards sown with corn. The slope of the Mount of Olives is here smooth, and thickly planted. On the side next the town the bare rocks rise abruptly out of the valley, and a number of tombs are cut in the face of them. Both Bishop Gobat and Dr Barclay agree in thinking that this is Calvary, where our Lord was crucified, and there seems much probability in the supposition. It is near the Palace of Pontius Pilate, where He was condemned; and it is exceedingly unlikely, that at a time when the public mind was so excited that the priests feared to lay hands on Jesus openly, they would have ventured to parade Him through the whole city of Jerusalem, as must have been the case if Calvary had been anywhere in the locality of the present church of the Holy Sepulchre. Again, we are told in the sacred narrative, that the Marys, and many other women who had followed Him from Galilee, 'were there beholding afar off.' Now, supposing this to be the place, nothing would be more natural for women shrinking from the brutal crowd assembled on the occasion, and yet anxious to testify to the last their love and fidelity towards their Lord, than to take up their station on the face of the Mount of Olives, where they would be exactly opposite His cross. The fact, that the whole of the lower part of the valley is now, and no doubt was then, full of gardens, and that the surrounding rocks contain sepulchral caves, makes it all the more likely that in this quarter Joseph of Arimathæa had his garden, and the new tomb 'wherein never man before was laid.' Wherever Calvary may have been, it is worth while

drawing attention to an error which, in speaking of it, all classes in our country are apt to fall into, and which probably had its origin in the stories brought back to Europe by the Crusaders,—I mean that of calling it *Mount Calvary*. In the accounts given us by the Evangelists of our Lord's crucifixion, there is not the slightest indication that Golgotha was on a hill or eminence of any kind; and even supposing that we accept, with blind credulity, the place within the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as the true site of the crucifixion, and could clear away all the masonry around it, it would be found to be nothing more than a narrow crag of rock on the side of the hill of Akra, to which the highest stretch of imagination could not attach the name of hill or mount.

In the upper part of the Valley of Jehoshaphat there is not much to interest. It is all under culture; but the number of small stones scattered on the surface is incredible, and would lead one to suppose that they must seriously interfere with the growth of crops. It is truly 'stony ground,' but not the kind which our Lord refers to in the parable of the sower; indeed, I am rather inclined to believe that any injury these stones may do to the sprouting corn is more than compensated for by the shield which they afford against the sun's rays, thus preserving to the ground, and the plants in it, the moisture which otherwise would speedily evaporate. In this, as also in the aluminous nature of the soil throughout the whole of Palestine, which long retains the rain that falls upon it, we can trace the wisdom and goodness of the glorious Creator in the provision he has made for rendering the inheritance which he gave in covenant to Abraham and his seed a fruitful land, notwithstanding the fierce heat of the sun to which it is exposed during the greater part of the year. The valley runs up to the north for some hundred yards beyond the north-east angle of the city wall, and then turns to the west. The road leading to Nablous and Damascus crosses it on a causeway at this part, and the old Roman pavement remains tolerably entire. Beyond it the rocks which bound the valley on either side are of a much harder kind of limestone than that of Bezétha, and have been extensively quarried in former days for building purposes. A few tombs occur in the rocks here, but their number is inconsiderable when compared with those met with farther down. The distance between this part of the valley and the present north wall is not much less than half a mile. The ground between is all under cultivation, and pretty thickly planted with olive trees. Numerous covered cisterns are met with in this space, which have long been in disuse, but which probably belonged

to country-houses without the ancient walls. As a small hole broken in the roof is all that indicates their existence, it makes riding in the neighbourhood perilous unless at a very moderate pace.

In this quarter there are three large artificial mounds, formed apparently by the refuse from the many soap manufactories which exist in Jerusalem. On more than one occasion I visited them with good Mr Calman, who was under the firm conviction that these mounds were formed by the ashes from the great altar of sacrifice. Being himself by birth a Jew, and a well read and observant as well as pious man, his suggestion was not to be cast lightly aside. It is quite true that the ashes were to be poured out in a clean place, without the camp (Leviticus iv. 12); and in that respect these mounds might answer very well, as they lie so near the valley of Jehoshaphat that even the wall of Agrippa must have run to the south of them. Still the damaging fact for this theory was that soap refuse is now deposited there, and has been probably for a couple of hundred years, and that similar mounds are found at Nablous and Hebron, where soap manufactories also exist. Dr Sim was a convert to Mr Calman's views, and it was agreed that he was to get a good sample of the refuse dug up, to be taken home by me for the purpose of being chemically analysed, but unfortunately it was not ready when I left. I have since learned, from a private source, that this refuse has been carefully analysed in England, and found to contain a large percentage of animal matter. I hope this report is true, for if so, these mounds will henceforth be regarded among the most interesting as well as ancient relics in the neighbourhood of the Holy City.<sup>1</sup> I would now call the attention of travellers to the subject, and at the same time make the *amende honorable* to my friend Mr Calman for my incredulousness at the time.

In this quarter there are two tombs worthy of notice. They are similar in style and construction, but the one is much inferior in execution to the other. The inferior one is probably the tomb of Queen Helena of Adiabene; the other is called 'the Tomb of the Kings.' Both of these are mentioned by Josephus as existing in this neighbourhood in his time. The latter is *outwardly* the largest, and certainly the most magnificent of the rock tombs in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> In the *Athenæum* of 21st April 1855, will be found a communication from Mr Finn of Jerusalem, from which it appears that Dr Roth of Munich, who had taken with him in 1853 two samples of these ashes, found on analysis that they were 'chiefly of animal and not of vegetable origin, and that they even contained small fragments of bone and teeth burnt to coal.'—ED.

Dr Robinson supposes that this is the tomb of Queen Helena and her son Izates; but its size, and the number of chambers and niches which it contains, render it unlikely that such a sepulchre should have been prepared for two or three individuals only, even though of regal rank. De Sauley, on the other hand, endeavours to make out that this is the place spoken of in Scripture as 'the sepulchres of David;' and had he held the office of undertaker to the royal house of Judah, and conducted all their funerals, he could not have pointed out with greater minuteness, and in a more easy off-hand way, the niche which each occupied than he has done in his work. It is certain from the testimony of Josephus that this sepulchre was outside the third, or Agrippa's wall;<sup>1</sup> and that puts a complete extinguisher on M. de Sauley's theory to its being the sepulchre of David. There were some kings, however, who were not buried there, and it is possible that this may have been the tomb which Manasseh had made for himself in the garden of Uzza.—2 Kings xxi. 18. Is it not much more likely, however, that 'the sepulchre of the kings,' mentioned by Josephus as existing in this quarter was the appointed place for the interment of the princes of the blood royal, who did not attain to kingly rank? Next to the royal mausoleum in the City of David, where the kings themselves were deposited in state, it is natural to suppose that their family tomb would hold the first rank in magnificence and importance; and Josephus at least affords us reasonable ground for supposing that this is what he means by the sepulchre of the kings, for he speaks of the monument of Herod by the 'Serpent's Pool,' intending us to understand thereby the sepulchres of the members of the royal Idumean family, as he elsewhere states expressly that Herod himself was buried at Herodium, some distance from Jerusalem, by his own command.<sup>2</sup> Just then, as 'the monument of Herod' was the familiar name given to the burying-place of his family, it seems probable that the name of 'the sepulchre of the kings' was given to that of the families of the royal line of David.

This tomb has in front of it a court which is, in round numbers, ninety feet square, cut in the solid rock to the depth of eighteen or twenty feet. The approach is by an inclined plane on the southern side, and is divided from the court by a wall also of solid rock, through which there is a door-way leading in to it. The bottom of this court is now thickly covered with rubbish. At its western end there is a portico, nearly forty feet long inside, having in front a portal which

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud., Lib. v., cap. 4.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Ant., Lib. xvii., cap. 8.

once was supported by two pillars and pilasters at the sides, to which, as it is much below the level of the court, there seems originally to have been a descent by a flight of steps, though no trace can be now found of them. The rock above is beautifully ornamented with wreaths of flowers, large clusters of grapes, and other ornamental devices. Amid all its changes of fortune these seem to have been respected until lately, when some modern barbarian has disfigured them sadly by an attempt to break off specimens to carry away. On descending into the portico, a small hole is seen on the left, below the level of the floor, in which a narrow inclined passage has been cut to give access to it. Entrance to the tomb can only be obtained by lying down flat, and crawling through this low aperture. Having struck a light, we found ourselves in a spacious hall, much encumbered with soil, in the midst of which is embedded the fragment of a sarcophagus from the chambers within. This soil we found to consist in great measure of human remains. Some one had lately been digging at the south-west corner of this hall, and on examination we found that the whole mass, to the depth of about three feet, consisted of human bones in all stages of decay. There are three chambers opening out of this hall, each containing six niches, in which sarcophagi had been originally placed. Beyond the western chamber a new tomb had been excavated to the north, which obviously had never been occupied. Above the places where the sarcophagi stood there are small niches for the reception of a lamp, and in many of them one can still trace the marks of smoke and of oil, which have discoloured the rock. Each of these chambers had a door formed of a single block of stone, with pivots left both above and below, which were let into grooves in the sill and lintel, but they have all been thrown down. Some remain



quite entire, while others have been broken in two by the fall. They are all ornamented with sculptured panels, thus—

With the exception of the fragment embedded in the outer hall there is not a vestige of a sarcophagus now in the tomb.

One of them, which is of marble beautifully sculptured, now does duty as a water trough in the Mekhémeh or Cadi's court. I was told that De Sauley had taken away another to France, and the broken pieces of the only one which afterwards remained Mr Finn got possession of for the museum of the Literary Society in the Consular premises.

The most interesting part of the tomb, in my estimation, however, is the stone by which it was closed. To this Dr Barclay first drew my attention. In a narrow passage cut in the floor of the portico, to the right of the low door of entrance, there is a circular stone, resem-

bling in form and size a small mill-stone, which fits the width of the passage exactly. A small semicircular recess has been cut out to correspond on the other side of the door, so that when the stone was rolled into it the door was completely blocked up. The passage in which the stone now rests has an incline at the bottom, and another underneath the floor enabled the keeper to get behind it, so that after having rolled it to its place with a lever, he had only to insert a wedge beneath to secure it firmly in its place; on the withdrawal of which it rolled down the incline by its own weight, and gave free access to the tomb. It is probably to an arrangement of this kind that Pausanias refers when he describes the door of the tomb of Helena as opening once a year by some mechanical contrivance. It afforded me a most beautiful and satisfactory illustration of the passage in which the angel is described as *rolling back* the stone from the door of the Lord's sepulchre.

Having thus described the most interesting localities in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem, the reader will, I trust, accompany me in some excursions to those which are more distant. I begin with that to the Mount of Olives, with which my walks and rides about Jerusalem generally ended. Starting from the garden of Gethsemane, let us pursue the footpath which leads up towards the summit. The ascent is steep, and the path, a very rough one, runs between two walls which enclose oliveyards on either side. The view of the Harám, and of the hill of Zion beyond it, from this point is very exquisite. The magnificent temple built by Herod must have been an object of dazzling grandeur as seen from this path; and sitting somewhere by its side, when His disciples had drawn His attention to its 'goodly stones' and exceeding beauty, our Lord predicted its complete overthrow in that prophecy wherein the final judgment is intimately blended with that which has already overtaken the Holy City. After two-thirds of this ascent have been accomplished, the path turns northwards towards the summit. A few steps to the south of the turning there is a large tomb underground, which goes by the name of 'the Tomb of the Prophets' (Kubúr el Umbia). Descending by a narrow passage with a steep incline, I found myself in a circular hall of large dimensions, with a domed roof cut in the rock, without ornament of any kind, which is now lighted by a hole broken in the roof. From it a passage leads into two semicircular galleries immediately behind the hall, in which there are many niches for the dead. Why the name of the prophets should have been given to this tomb does not appear.

We have now reached the top of the southern shoulder of Mount Olivet, and most probably in ancient days the path led straight over it without ascending to the summit of the mountain as the modern one does. I often crossed over the intervening olive-yards through which I fancy it ran, and where probably the barren fig-tree grew, and struck into the modern path again just where it begins to descend to Bethany. For the present let us keep to the modern path, which after another short ascent brings us within a few yards of a mosque that crowns the summit. To this mosque, which is in a neglected and ruinous condition, access can be obtained without difficulty, as the old Sheikh is very obliging; indeed, as it is one of the stations visited by the Easter pilgrims when they come, he knows too well the value of a backshish to offer any opposition. Within the court there is a small chapel called the Church of the Ascension, originally built by the Empress Helena to commemorate the supposed place from which our Lord ascended up to heaven. In the middle of this chapel a bit of the rock crops out, having a cavity in it, which, since the seventh century, has been shown as the mark left by the Saviour's foot in the act of ascending! The tradition that this was the spot reaches as far back as the fourth century; and notwithstanding all that may be attempted in defence of early Christian tradition, this proves indisputably, as Dr Robinson well remarks, how little reliance can be placed on it, as the site here fixed on is in notorious contradiction to the Scripture narrative. From the top of the minaret there is a most extensive and charming panoramic view. Jerusalem lies at our feet; but the view of it from this point is not so interesting as those obtained lower down, because owing to its height we look down upon a confused mass of roofs, domes, and minarets. The view to the eastward is the one which fixes the attention. In a deep basin to the south-east the leaden waters of the Dead Sea enjoy a lazy repose, seeming motionless, as if the breath of heaven never stirred them, and placid as though no guilty secrets lay buried far below their surface. The mountains of Moab rise precipitously out of the lake, leaving for miles no margin along which the foot of man may scramble. I never tired of gazing on those glorious hills, for there is a constant variety of light and shade upon them. Even at this distance their shadows can be seen falling far into the lake; and as the sun declines, their crimson and purple tints transport one to fairy land. From this minaret the beetling crags above Kerak (the Kir of Moab) are distinctly seen, but the town itself I was never able to make out, though it also is said to be visible. Farther north, a portion of the arid plain below Jericho is

disclosed to view, with a long thin streak of green stretching away northward for many miles, which marks the course of the Jordan. Still facing the east, but looking on the Mount of Olives itself, we find that this mosque does not stand quite on the summit, as it appears to do when seen from Jerusalem. A few yards beyond it is the highest point on which a Mohammedan Weli has been built, and around it there are traces of considerable ruins. Its elevation, as given by Schubert, is 2556 Paris feet above the Mediterranean, and 416 above the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

Returning once more to the path, and descending by it to the eastward, we come upon another shoulder of the Mount of Olives, which hitherto has been invisible. It lies immediately behind that which is the southern shoulder of the mountain as seen from Jerusalem. There is a narrow platform of level ground where these two shoulders meet, and immediately afterwards the path descends rapidly to Bethany. Let us take our stand on the top of this hitherto unseen elevation. On the west there is nothing seen but the twin hill we have just crossed, thinly sprinkled with olive trees; Jerusalem is as completely hid from view as if it were a hundred miles away. To the south the Jericho road skirts its very base. To the east we look down on the wilderness of Judea, the Dead Sea, and the mountains of Moab; but coming closer to its edge, there lies the little village of Bethany immediately below us, built upon the lowest slope of the hill. If we look into the last chapter of the Gospel of St Luke, there can be no doubt where we now are. We are standing on the very spot where our Lord blessed His disciples, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. The multitude of tradition-hunters go up yonder to the left to kiss the hole in the rock, which they call the Redeemer's foot-print, and they leave to us this most sacred spot of earth, where 'the going away' is associated with 'the coming again.' We thank them for the boon. Long may it continue as now without any idolatrous mark to disfigure it. Bethany looks so close below, that one could almost fancy it possible to leap into it from where we stand; and knowing as we do that our Lord ascended from the mount called Olivet, no language could more accurately describe the spot than those words of St Luke, 'He led them out as far as to Bethany.'—Compare Acts i. 12 with Luke xxiv. 50. Mr Williams is fully aware of the passage just quoted; but being determined to uphold the Mosque as the true spot of the Ascension, because the tradition to this effect reaches back to the anti-Nicene period, he seeks to reconcile them by suggesting that Bethany was a *parish*, which included the summit of the Mount



of Olives within its boundaries! No special pleader could go beyond this.

Bethany, in our Lord's day, must have been considerably larger than the present village; and from broken columns, and other traces of ruins by the side of the path as we descend, it is probable that it extended still farther up the eastern side of the mountain than at present. Its modern name is El Azariyah, or 'the Village of Lazarus,' and it consists of about a score of low mud-roofed huts, tenanted by the fellahin who till the neighbouring fields. There are no remains of ancient edifices save one ruined tower, and that, as a matter of course, is fixed on as the house of Lazarus and his sisters. A subterranean vault consisting of two chambers, to which we descend by a long flight of steps, is pointed out as the grave of Lazarus. The outer chamber is certainly nothing more than the vault or cellar of a house, the walls of which have been constructed in the ordinary way with stone and lime; and my impression is, though the friends who visited it with me thought otherwise, that the inner chamber was similarly constructed. It does not require such doubtful monuments, however, to awaken an interest in that village. It was the Lord's resting-place when he came up to Jerusalem; it was the school where He often instructed His disciples in the mysteries of the kingdom of God; it was the place where His words distilled as the dew, and fell with vivifying power on Mary's heart; and it was here that, as the Resurrection and the Life, he brought forth Lazarus from his grave.

On the opposite side of a narrow but deep wadi, to the south-east of Bethany, stands the village of Abu Dis, which many suppose to be Bethphage. It scarce merits a visit; we shall, therefore, return to Jerusalem by the Jericho road, which winds round the southern side of the Mount of Olives. There are two spurs of the mountain which run out far beyond this road to the south towards the Wadi en Nar, or Kedron Valley, and between them there is a very deep ravine filled with fig trees, the fruit of which is celebrated as being the earliest ripe about Jerusalem. On arriving at that part of the road which crosses the first of these spurs, Bethany is in sight behind, and the spur nearer to Jerusalem is exactly opposite us in front, while the road is skirting the Mount of Olives on the right hand. In order to cross the head of the ravine, the road after this makes a long turn to the north, and then doubles back again on the opposite side, following the conformation of the mountain.

'Do you see that spur before us?' Dr Barclay asked me one day when we were walking along the road; 'I have discovered the traces

of an ancient village upon it; and from this spot you may judge for yourself how exactly it corresponds with the description given by the Evangelists of Bethphage.'

The fact was as he had stated. We subsequently found cisterns and trenches for the foundations of houses cut in the rock, and broken pottery, upon the promontory opposite us, which left no doubt that a village in ancient times had existed there. From the point where we stood, had our Lord desired to indicate that village to his disciples, it would have been impossible to do so in a more unmistakeable manner than by the words 'the village over against you.' There was probably a short cut then as now, from the one promontory to the other, down the steep side of the ravine and up the opposite one; and when the Lord 'sent forth' the two disciples, he no doubt instructed them to take this near path and get the colt in readiness ere his arrival, while he followed the windings of the ordinary road with the other disciples and the attending multitude. Bethphage means in the Hebrew language 'the house of figs;' and the fact just mentioned, that the figs ripen earlier in the narrow glen below than in any other place about Jerusalem, affords another strong corroboration that this is the true situation of that village. The chief difficulty hitherto in identifying it has been the order in which the places have been enumerated by the Evangelists: 'And when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives,' etc.—Mark xi. 1; Luke xix. 29. This led Messrs Bonar and M'Cheyne, and many besides, to look for Bethphage in Abu Dis, or some other village to the east of Bethany, as our Lord was, at the time when this event happened, coming from Jericho to Jerusalem. This difficulty, however, vanishes, if we suppose that Jerusalem having been spoken of first, the two villages are mentioned according to their geographical relation to it instead of to Jericho. Indeed, the clear indication given by St John, that Jesus slept at Bethany the previous night, seems to render this solution the only possible one.—John xii. 2, 12. This village lay but a few hundred yards to the south of the Jericho road.

Proceeding towards Jerusalem, ten minutes bring us to the ridge which connects the Mount of Olives with the Hill of Offence, and suddenly the site of the ancient temple bursts into view, with the city in the back-ground. As the finest view of the city as a whole is obtained from Scopus, so the view of the Harám from this point is unrivalled by any other in the environs. The temple, glittering with gold and silver, as the rays of the morning sun rested on it, must have been a most gorgeous spectacle; and over such the Saviour wept when He

beheld it from this very spot. Descending now along the western side of the Mount of Olives towards Gethsemane, the top of Absalom's Pillar is seen rising from the valley to our left; and the intervening space has been, for a couple of thousand years at least, the common place of Jewish sepulture. On another occasion, I formed one of a party who rode down the Wadi en Nar, or 'Fire Valley,' for several miles below the well of En Rogel, from whence, striking up a narrow glen to the north, we came to the village of Abu Dis, and so on to the road from Bethany just described. Wadi en Nar, so far as we followed it, was well cultivated, but possessed none of the picturesque features which it exhibits farther down in the neighbourhood of Deir Mar Saba.

On the 4th of March a party, consisting of Miss Chesney, two of the lay members of the Jewish Mission staff, and myself, set out, under the guidance of Dr Sim, to visit a remarkable cave at Khureitún some miles beyond Bethlehem, which the monks point out as the Cave of Adullam. After a week of rain, we were most fortunate in having a lovely day, and all mustered at the Yaffa Gate at eight o'clock. After getting quit of the importunities of the poor lepers who begged by the wayside beyond the gate, and emerging from the Valley of Hinnom, we galloped over the plain of Rephaim, passed the convent of Mar Elias, and were soon in sight of Rachel's tomb. Instead of descending to it, however, we kept along the crest of the hill and entered Bethlehem from the north. Within half a mile of it we came upon a part of Solomon's aqueduct, formed of massive blocks, which conveyed water from the pools at Burák to the upper pool of Gihon. Not far from it there is a fountain, round which a bevy of the Bethlehemite maidens may be seen congregated at most hours of the day, which is said to be the one from which David's captains drew water for him, after having burst through the garrison of the Philistines; but there is a well just outside the town to the south which corresponds better with 'the well that was by the gate,' as this fountain must have been then, as now, far beyond the precincts of the town. Below the hill on which it stands, towards the east, there is a wadi quite deserving the name of a plain, and on it is pointed out an ancient building, rejoicing in the name of 'the House of the Shepherds.' As there is abundant room for the pasture of flocks on the surrounding hills, and as the soil in this valley is so rich that even now every inch of it is under culture, it may be a question whether it were not more to the point to look in that direction for the fields of Boaz, where Ruth the Moabitess gleaned behind his reapers.

The population of Bethlehem is almost entirely Christian. The women do not wear the yashmak, and some of them are remarkably beautiful. Both men and women have a paler complexion than the fellahin around; and it is said that this is owing to the European blood which courses in their veins since the time of the Crusades. I was startled, as we rode along the narrow street, by a curtsy or a bow from several of the children we met, accompanied by a 'Good morning! how are you?' in excellent English. On appealing to Dr Sim for an explanation, as they were evidently not Europeans, I found they were the children of Protestant converts attending the school which Bishop Gobat had opened in the town. Mr Sandretzki, one of the missionaries, preaches in Arabic to the native converts on alternate Sabbaths here and in Jerusalem. As the hour of meeting in the latter place was only half-an-hour before the commencement of the English service, I attended only on one occasion, when there were about fifty worshippers present, who listened with devout attention. Mr Sandretzki preaches with much earnestness, and with fluent command of their language.

The town of Bethlehem forms a kind of irregular triangle, at the apex of which, facing the east, is a huge pile of buildings, known as the Church of the Nativity, or more familiarly as the Convent of Bethlehem. Three at least of the rival sects have churches within its walls. The Greeks have managed to secure the chief place; the Latin and Armenian churches forming aisles on either side of it. The principal door which once led into the church has long been built up, and a very low doorway, furnished with a door of prodigious thickness, with bolts and bars to match, proclaims at once the church-militant state of the inmates, and the hopelessness of any Bedouin attack. The nave of the church, to which this door gives access, is very handsome, a double row of marble pillars supporting the roof and dividing the aisles on either side; but a wall has been built across it near the choir, and it is now used only as a cloister. I was not able to ascertain the reason for thus disfiguring so fine a building. The way to the Latin Church is through a labyrinth of cloisters, in one of which, hearing the buzz of children's voices, I walked into the chamber whence it proceeded, and found myself in a school where 150 children of both sexes were being taught by two of the monks. They were very civil, and invited me to be seated and hear what was going on. Both the Italian and Arabic languages were used; and the answers of the children in the Italian examinations were most creditable both to teachers and taught. It formed a most agreeable contrast to anything I had yet seen in

the conventual establishments of the East, and I record it with pleasure.

Though the Latins have been shoved into a corner above ground, they have possession of the much-coveted holy place below. The Franciscan who acted as our guide, complained bitterly of the rapacious spirit of the Greeks, adding, 'The whole church was once ours; now they have driven us out of the chief place, and would rob us of the manger too if they could.' The churches are not much worth looking at, and they have been so frequently described that it is unnecessary to say anything about them here. Provided with tapers, we descended by a flight of steps, and after passing through several carefully locked doors, were ushered into the cave in which tradition says that the Virgin 'brought forth her first-born son, and laid Him in a manger.' As it is entirely encased in marble, it is impossible to say whether any part of the walls are artificial; but as there is no access to it except by two flights of steps, I suppose it is cut out of the rock, and this I consider the only objection to accepting the tradition, as it is quite impossible that horses, asses, or other animals could have made their way down these stairs into the stable. It matters little, however, to determine the exact spot; it is enough for the purposes of true devotion to know that somewhere within the circuit of half a mile (which includes the whole town), 'the Word was made flesh.' The grotto is not large, and is narrow in proportion to the length. The height is about ten feet, and a single pillar supports the roof, from which a profusion of lamps are hung. At one end is the altar, and underneath it a silver star is fastened in the floor, marking the place where the Virgin lay, and beside it the following inscription:—

'Hic de Virgine Mariâ Jesus Christus natus est.'

The star first mentioned was the gift of the French Consul in 1853, to replace a very magnificent one, which was said to have been stolen by the Greeks. Silver lamps are kept continually burning above the altar, and also in a small chapel to the right, in which a marble slab is pointed out as the place where the Child was washed and swathed; and under an altar opposite, a portion of the natural rock, said to be the manger where the Child Jesus was laid, and where the wise men of the East worshipped him. This chapel is several feet below the floor of the grotto, and is reached by a short flight of steps. At the end of the grotto, opposite the altar, another door leads into a dark passage, where a chapel is shown, into which Joseph retired during the birth of the Child; and a recess, with a grating before it,

which is the sepulchre of the innocents of Bethlehem whom Herod slew. The monk told us that one of their tongues and one of their right hands were still preserved in the Church of the Sepulchre at Jerusalem! Here again there is so much grossly fabulous matter as to suggest grave suspicions that the whole is a fabrication. Another chamber is pointed out as the cell of Jerome, in which he accomplished his translation of the Scriptures into Latin, and near it is shown the tomb where his body lies. He was for many years a monk in this convent.

Leaving the convent, we passed the well beside the gate, the water of which David coveted when shut up in the cave of Adullam, and descended by a most perilous and slippery path to a deep wadi on the south side of the town, which runs towards the Dead Sea. After following this for a while, we struck across the country in the direction of Tekúa, keeping Ghebel Fureidis, or the 'Frank Mountain,' on our left, and after a ride of three hours from Bethlehem, on descending into a hollow between two gentle eminences, we found ourselves suddenly, and much to our surprise, on the edge of a frightful precipice looking down into a narrow wadi 300 or 400 feet below. This wadi bears the name of Khureitún, as do also the ruins of a town on the edge of the precipice. On our arrival there did not appear to be a single soul in the neighbourhood; but the Arabs seem gifted with the same telescopic vision as the vultures when there is a question of prey, for we had not been many seconds among the ruins ere we had half a dozen of them around us, though none of our party could tell from whence they came. The Doctor and the other two gentlemen had brought their pistols with them, and took care to fire them as if in sport to awaken the echoes of the deep wadi below, but in reality to let the Ishmaelites, to whom we entrusted our horses, see that the party was armed and would stand no nonsense. That preliminary having been satisfactorily settled, we got over the edge of the precipice, and moving cautiously along a projecting ledge, at last found our path blocked up by great masses of rock, which seemed to have been riven by an earthquake from the cliffs overhead, and to have found a resting-place on the little path we were traversing. There was nothing for it but to hoist up one of the party on our shoulders, who in turn drew up the rest, and by a series of such movements we came at last opposite the entrance to the cave, which can only be gained by an awkward leap from one of these rocks over a chasm nearly five feet wide. Most ladies would have made no end of difficulties, but with a brave Irish heart Miss Chesney overcame all these obstacles, and

we found ourselves safely in the mouth of the cave, which, previous to the fall of these rocks, must have been a very secure stronghold, as it is fully twenty feet above the ledge. There is another entrance at the same height, a few feet farther to the south-east, which looks fairly down the precipice, and to which there could be no access without ropes thrown down from within. On the low roof of this passage, the names of many former visitors are inscribed, among which I observed those of Messrs Irby, Mangles, and Laborde. A short passage of fifteen feet leads into a large vaulted hall of great height, from which passages strike off in every direction, forming a perfect labyrinth. One of these brought us into a rotunda of still nobler dimensions with a domed roof, capable of containing several hundred men, so that, in point of accommodation, David and all his band could have lodged in safety in the chambers around.

Under the guidance of Dr Sim, who had been often here, we followed the passage which leads to the extremity of the cave, and which, except in one place where we had to crawl on hands and knees for about ten feet, had an average height of four feet throughout. Passing through a series of halls smaller in size than those already mentioned, we arrived at last at the innermost one, which is very capacious, but irregular in form, and not so high as those near the entrance. The entire length of the cave from the entrance to this last hall is 650 English feet. Few travellers have penetrated to the end of it, and I believe Miss Chesney has the honour of being the first lady who ever accomplished that feat: others, after braving the perils of the entrance, having been deterred by the ten feet crawl. Each was obliged to carry a candle; and between the heat thus caused, and the exertion of climbing and descending the irregular narrow passage, we found the atmosphere of the innermost chamber very overpowering. The rock is of the same cretaceous character which we had observed in the quarries in the hill of Bezétha.

Though this cave, since the time of the Crusaders, has borne the name of Adullam among the monks and Europeans, it does not seem to have any real claim to it. Eusebius and Jerome place the cave of Adullam about ten miles distant from Eleutheropolis<sup>1</sup> (the modern Beit Jibrein), which is in the valley or plain to the west of the mountains of Judah. Josephus also expressly states that the cave of Adullam was in the vicinity of a city of the same name; and the city of Adullam, we know from Joshua's list, was 'in the valley,' that

<sup>1</sup> Relandi Palest., p. 549.

is, in the same quarter in which Eusebius and Jerome place it. So that, although in dimensions the cave of Khureitún is capacious enough to have served David and his men for a hiding-place, we cannot identify it with the cave of Adullam. This cave, however, is within the bounds of the wilderness of Engedi, and I was at one time disposed to think it might be 'the stronghold at Engedi,' which is mentioned in 1 Sam. xxiii. 29; but a more attentive examination of this, and other passages in which this 'hold' is mentioned, has led me to the conclusion, that if our translators had retained the original Hebrew word, instead of attempting to translate it, there would have been no difficulty in recognising in David's stronghold at Engedi that MASADA<sup>1</sup> which, at a later period, became so famous for the heroic resistance and tragic fate of the Sicarii, under Eleazar their leader, when they were besieged by the Roman general, Flavius Silva. A full account of that last episode in the history of the subjection of Judea is given by Josephus in his Jewish wars.—(Book vii., chap. 8.) That this Masada (now called Sebbeh) was 'the hold' to which David retired from Jerusalem when the Philistines came up to the Valley of Rephaim, is strongly confirmed by another passage in which the Jewish historian speaks of it in these words: 'There was a fortress of very great strength, not far from Jerusalem, called Masada, built by our ancient kings, both as a repository for their effects in time of war, and at the same time for a place of defence for themselves.'<sup>2</sup>

Having thoroughly explored the cave of Khureitún, and satisfied the Táamerah Arabs who had kept our horses, we remounted; and, after retracing our steps along the wadi till opposite the Frank Mountain, we dashed off for it at a gallop through the midst of corn-fields, nor slackened our pace till we had got to the foot of the artificial cone which begins about half way up the hill. No serviceable Arabs were here to act as grooms; so tethering our animals to the thorny *bellán* shrubs growing around, we scrambled up by a narrow footpath which winds round the cone. The view from it is very extensive. Bethlehem is seen to the north-west, and the village of Tekúa to the south; and beyond the barren hills of the wilderness of Engedi, the glimpses of the Dead Sea and of the mountains of Moab are most beautiful. Again, the pointed crag which rises above Kerak was distinctly visible, but none of us could make out the town itself, though

<sup>1</sup> The Hebrew word which has been translated 'hold,' or stronghold, in 1 Sam. xxiii. 29, 2 Sam. v. 17, 2 Sam. xxiii. 14, is מַצְדָּה Mazuda, or Masada.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. iv. cap. 7.



it is said to be visible from hence, as from the summit of the Mount of Olives. The cone on which we stood was hollow within nearly to a level with the ground on which we had left the horses below; and its sides were cased with masonry, which in many places had fallen in. It derives the name of 'the Frank Mountain' from a tradition, which has no support in history, that the Franks held this post for 40 years after the Saracens had got possession of Jerusalem and the rest of Palestine. It is called by the Arabs Ghebel el Fureidis. We saw from the top, and afterwards passed, the ruins of a considerable town, and of a large reservoir at the northern base of the hill; and these, together with the artificial appearance of the cone, give strong ground for the belief that this was the fortress of Herodium, built by Herod the Great, and in which he was buried. Josephus tells us that 'this citadel is distant from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. It was strong by nature, and fit for such a building. It is a sort of a moderate hill, raised to a farther height by the labour of hands till it was of the shape of a woman's breast. It is encompassed with circular towers, and hath a straight ascent up to it; which ascent is composed of steps of polished stones two hundred in number. About the bottom are habitations of such a structure as are well worth seeing, not only on account of the water which is brought thither from a great way off, and at a vast expense, for the place itself is destitute of water, but on many other accounts. The plain that is about this citadel is full of edifices not inferior to any city in largeness, having the hill above them in the nature of a castle.'<sup>1</sup> He elsewhere tells us that it was 'on a mountain towards Arabia,' and that it was 'near Tekoa,' so that there can be little room to doubt that this is the Herodium. It is probable that the modern name it bears of El Fureidis, or Paradise, took its rise from the palaces and gardens which Herod had erected in this hitherto desert locality. This place has also been supposed to be the Beth-haccerem mentioned by the Prophet Jeremiah in connection with Tekoa; but as it must have been anything but a commanding height, on which to 'set up a sign of fire,' before the cone was added by the labour of men's hands in Herod's day, I take leave to doubt the probability of this identification. It appears more likely that the modern village of Beit Tamar, which stands prominently on a hill to the east of Bethlehem, and which could be seen to a great distance, is the village Bethacharma, mentioned by Jerome as lying between Jerusalem and Tekúa. But for

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. xv. cap. 9.

the fact that the Frank Mountain, previous to Herod's labours, must have been a very diminutive one in comparison with those around, its situation would suit very well the description given by the prophet; but to my mind that objection is fatal, as the fire-signal of danger would naturally be raised on the most conspicuous place.

We returned to Bethlehem by the village of Beit Tamar, the only one belonging to the Táamerah Bedouins, who, however, use it merely as a store, because they dwell in tents. But, instead of taking the reader by that route, we shall follow up the course of a little stream of running water, nearly due west from the Frank Mountain, which will bring us into the Wadi Urtás. There before us lies a single farmhouse surrounded by fields of corn, and an orchard well stocked with fruit-trees which have been brought over from the New World, as well as with the olive, fig, and apricot trees, which are indigenous. The occupant is Meshullam, a converted Jew, who formerly kept an hotel in Jerusalem. He had been two years in possession when I visited Urtás, and, in addition to the members of his own family, gave employment to the Arabs of the neighbourhood on his farm. He has often to contend, gun in hand, with the thievish Bedouins, who come to carry off his corn and fruits; but by fair speeches, threats, and presents, he has hitherto been able to hold his own. His attempt at farming is a mere experiment; and, from the propinquity of the Bedouins, as well as from disagreements with some Americans who had at first patronized him, he was uncertain whether it would succeed. I have not since heard of him. He seemed an energetic man; and the specimen of agriculture which his farm in Urtás presented, was very different from that practised in the country around, and it is therefore desirable, not only for his own sake, but as an example to the fellahin, that his spirited attempt should be successful. A better locality for making it could not be desired; for there is a supply of water not only from the Pools of Solomon at the head of the valley, but also from a beautiful clear spring which issues from below the hill to the north, a few hundred yards above his farm. This fountain has been enclosed by an ancient massive wall, which still remains, and is believed to be 'the spring enclosed, the fountain sealed,' to which Solomon likens his bride in the Song, while the farm of Meshullam is supposed to be the *Hortus conclusus*, 'the enclosed garden,' of the same passage.—Cant iv. 12. Close to this fountain is the ruinous and thinly inhabited village of Urtás, occupying the site of the ancient town of Etam or Etham, which we learn from Scripture was fortified by Rehoboam (2 Chron. xi. 6), and which Josephus tells us was famous for the fountains and

gardens of his father Solomon. In describing his chariots, horses, and attendants, he says—‘They were armed with bows, and in this dress attended the king (himself riding in a chariot, and wearing a white garment) as he marched out of the city to a place not far from Jerusalem called Ethan, pleasant for its beautiful gardens, and delightful fountains; for thither he used to go every morning for his recreation and pleasure.’<sup>1</sup> Mr Williams states that the valley still goes by the name of Wadi Etan; but I never heard any name but Wadi Urtás given it, either on the spot or among the residents at Jerusalem; nevertheless, the identity of the place seems certain from the existence of gardens there to the present day, and the vicinity of Solomon’s Pools, which were intended for their irrigation, as he himself tells us (Eccles. ii. 5, 6), as well as for the supply of the capital.

Leaving the bottom of the wadi, and scrambling up the hill to the north, we come upon the aqueduct, along the top of which there is a path leading up to the pools. As already stated, they are three in number; and being constructed by immense dams thrown across the valley, they rise one above the other till the uppermost one reaches its head, where the road to Hebron passes. The largest pool is that which is lowest down the valley.—the smallest, that nearest the road.<sup>2</sup> The first time I passed on my way from Hebron the upper one alone contained water; but on subsequent visits I found them all so full that the ordinary channels did not suffice to carry off the water, which was pouring in floods over the sides. The fountain from which these aqueducts are supplied is on the side of the hill to the north-west of the upper pool, opposite the Saracenic fortress el Burák, and about a couple of hundred yards distant from the pool. The entrance was by a small round hole like the mouth of a cistern, which seemed to lead

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. viii., cap. 7.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Robinson gives the following measurements:—

I. LOWER POOL.

Length 582 feet—Breadth  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{East end 207} \\ \text{West end 148} \end{array} \right\}$  Depth at East end 50 feet.

II. MIDDLE POOL.

Length 423 feet—Breadth  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{East end 250} \\ \text{West end 160} \end{array} \right\}$  Depth at East end 39 feet.

III. UPPER POOL.

Length 380 feet—Breadth  $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{East end 236} \\ \text{West end 229} \end{array} \right\}$  Depth at East end 25 feet.

There is a distance of 160 feet between the Upper and Middle Pools, and of 248 between the Middle and Lower ones.

down to a deep well. To carry ropes from Jerusalem was not a feat of easy accomplishment, and various attempts which I made to descend into it, in company with Mr Sampson, Mr Graham, and Dr Sim, proved abortive. Maundrell, however, who descended, tells us that at the bottom there is a vaulted chamber leading into another farther in the hill, in which there are four springs, from which the water rises. A subterranean channel brings down the stream to the north-west corner of the upper pool, where there is a descent by a flight of steps into another chamber, through which the water runs, and where the Arab women of the neighbourhood may be seen filling their water skins. Here the stream divides into two channels, part running off into the aqueduct which supplies the mosque at Jerusalem, and the rest falling into the pool.

Having heard from Dr Barclay that the problem as to whether the arch was known in Jewish architecture had been triumphantly solved by the discovery of arched chambers beneath these pools, I went with Mr Graham on one occasion, provided with lights, determined to explore them. Under the upper pool there is no chamber, or at least, if there is, no entrance to it has been discovered. Towards the bottom of the eastern wall of the second pool, one of Meshullam's Arab servants, whom we had brought as our guide, pointed out a small opening, which he assured us was the entrance. Creeping into it with some difficulty, we lighted our candles, and found ourselves in a narrow passage, three feet wide and six feet high, built with large hewn stones, and arched above, leading underneath the pool; but we had not proceeded many feet until our progress was impeded by the water which filled the passage, and as the drops from the vault threatened to extinguish our lights, we were obliged to beat a retreat. At the third pool we were more fortunate. The opening was equally small and inconvenient; but having effected an entrance, we found ourselves in a passage exactly similar to that we had been obliged to abandon in the former. This, too, was arched throughout, leaving no doubt as to the knowledge possessed by Solomon's architects. This passage was about twelve feet in length, and its floor an inclined plane, fully four feet lower at the farther end than at the entrance. It led into a chamber about twelve feet square, built with hewn stone, and beautifully vaulted. A stream of water, issuing from an aperture in the western wall of this chamber opposite the passage, flowed in an open channel right across the floor to the north-east angle, where it entered the aqueduct that leads to Jerusalem. This chamber, and the passage leading into it, must have been constructed when the

pools were originally made, for they have in every respect the same character of architecture, and the eye can detect no vestige of patch-work, which must have been the case had they been cut out at any subsequent period. The Wadi Biar, through which we had travelled when coming from Hebron, falls into Wadi Urtás almost immediately below the lowest pool; and the course of the aqueduct, which I had seen from the hill above it, is distinctly traceable to the upper pool.

A few miles beyond this to the south-west, there is a village called Beit Zakariyah, supposed by some to have been the dwelling-place of Zacharias the Priest, and the birth-place of John the Baptist, and by the Mohammedans, to be the burial-place of the Prophet Zechariah. There is no evidence from Scripture, nor from the writings of Josephus, for believing that it ever was a city of the priests; and therefore, its claims as the birth-place of John the Baptist, cannot come into competition with those of Hebron and Yuttah, which we know were assigned to them.<sup>1</sup> This village, however, is mentioned by Josephus as the place where Judas Maccabeus met the advancing army of Antiochus Epiphanes, and was defeated after a bloody battle.<sup>2</sup> Leaving the Hebron road, we turned up a wadi among the hills to the south-west; and after an hour's brisk ride through a country covered with brush-wood, consisting chiefly of juniper and arbutus, we arrived at the village. In this ride, my companions were Messrs Sampson, Graham and Sim. As we had already had a long day's journey from Mar Saba, and feared arriving too late at the gates of Jerusalem, we were obliged to get over the ground as rapidly as possible; and the guide whom we had taken from Meshullam's farm being on foot, was rather a hinderance. Much amusement was afforded us by Mr Sampson setting him off at a run, and keeping him at it by galloping after him, brandishing his whip, and shouting out the only Arabic word in his vocabulary, *Ruch, Ruch*, 'Go on, Go on.' The lad was as much amused as we were, and gathering up his long petticoat-garments, and twisting his striped aba firmly about his waist, so as to let his legs, encased in very wide drawers, have full play,—he ran bare-footed at such a

<sup>1</sup> Reland, under the word יוֹטָא, Juta, expresses an opinion which seems to me to have great force. It is, that the Greek letter *Delta* has been accidentally exchanged for the Hebrew letter *Teth* in Luke i. 39, and that the true reading of that verse is—'Mary went into the hill country with haste, into a city *Juta* (not *Juda*), and entered into the house of Zacharias,' etc. Without this reading the passage is obscure, in the midst of a narrative which the Evangelist is endeavouring to render minutely explicit.—See *Reland Palest.*, p. 870.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. i. cap. 1.

rapid pace, that it took all the mettle of our beasts to keep up with him. The costume, the country, the attitude of this young Arab at the time, with our friend in full chase, brought very forcibly to my mind a Bible scene which must have borne a striking similarity to it, viz., Elijah the Prophet, with girt-up garments, running at full speed over the plain of Esdraelon before the chariot of Ahab. The difference lay in the miraculous strength with which the prophet was endued.

In former days Beit Zakariyah must have been a place of some importance. Many ruins are now scattered about, and a number of cisterns are cut in the rocks around. A beautiful caruba tree grows close to the village. Beside it there is an ancient vault, at the entrance of which lay the capitals of several columns, but the shafts were nowhere to be seen. The modern village consists of a group of about a dozen mud huts. The inhabitants of both sexes were sitting chatting on a little green to the north as we rode up; one or two of the women only being engaged in beating out maize, and grinding it in a handmill for the evening meal. Our salám was returned by their *Marhábbah* ('welcome'), but they did not move; and we passed through the village to the crest of the hill on which it is situated, from which there is an extensive view to the west. We halted by the village well, and were speedily joined by an old man with a venerable white beard, who proved to be the Sheikh el Ballád, or head man of the village. He was very civil and communicative, giving us the names of the numerous villages in sight. The undulating country which lay to the west of the range of hills on which we stood, is a portion of 'the valley' or plain of Judah, which was called Sephéleh by the Jews. Low bare hills, without a tree, succeeding one another like waves, is the character of the landscape, and there were few villages in sight to break the monotony. To the north-west there was not one; but to the south-west he pointed out Beit Atab. Jaba, no doubt the Gibeah of Judah (Josh. xv. 57), and Beit Jibrein, the ancient Eleutheropolis. He also pointed out the direction in which Gaza lay. We could not see the town; but the sand hills which border the shore of the Mediterranean, and the sea itself, were distinctly visible. While we were engaged with our survey two women came to draw water, arrayed in the never-failing blue chemise, which was fastened in at the waist by loose drawers of the same material. They wore caps on their heads, ornamented by a border of silver coins, which hung down their cheeks exactly like the clasps of a dragoon's helmet. One of them carried a rope, the other an earthenware pitcher and skin. They began at once to clamour for

backshish, and sat by the well laughing and making their remarks upon the *Franjees*. These probably were not complimentary, as both the Sheikh and our guide remonstrated loudly. We were all thirsty, and asked for *Moie*, which they brought us very readily, and thus earned the greedily coveted donation.

Mr Van de Velde having stumbled on this village passed a night in it, and speaks of its containing a monument to the Prophet Zechariah. We heard nothing of this, and unless the vault at the entrance of the village be considered such, there is nothing round about to do duty for a monument. He says he had expected to reach Jerusalem in five hours from this village, which he might most easily have done even at a snail's pace, but it is a perfect marvel in what direction he could have wandered to have spent ten hours on the journey. We had, on leaving the village, exactly two hours to get over the ground before the gates closed: dismissing therefore our good-natured guide, to save him another race, the word was passed *saue qui peut*, and we started at a rattling pace for Jerusalem; but notwithstanding our best endeavours we arrived about ten minutes too late, and found Bab el Khalil locked in our faces. The soldiers inside denied all admittance; the keys had already been taken down to the Seraiyah, at the other end of the town; and our case, though not hopeless, was one which required patience. By promises of a backshish, often reiterated, a soldier started for the Consul's kavass, and in his company proceeded to the Governor's, and brought back the keys. In the mean time, with a cold wind freezing our vitals, we had to sit in the dark for a whole hour outside, and were finally admitted only after the backshish had been first shoved through the partially opened gate.

The next excursion was not quite so far to the south-west of the city, though still in that direction. On this occasion my companions were Miss Chesney and Mr Graham, and our destination the town and the mountains of Bether (Beitir). We left by the same gate, and passing along the side of the conduit and upper pool of Gihon, rode due west for nearly a mile, when we turned at the base of the western hills down a wadi to the south, in which is situated the Greek Convent of the Holy Cross. The effects of Russian gold are to be seen in the renovated condition and comfortable look of almost all the Greek religious edifices in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and in none more strikingly than in this Convent of the Cross, which looked bright and clean from a thorough repair, which was scarcely finished. It must be acknowledged that the Greeks show more industry, and take more pains in cultivating the soil, than all the other inhabitants of this

land put together. Great improvements in cultivation were taking place around the convent; dry-stone walls were being built to separate fields, waste lands were being reclaimed, and new vineyards planted. Another instance of the abundant supply of Russian gold to the convents is to be found in the startling fact, that from the Bab el Khalil to this convent, and from hence across the plain of Rephaim to Mar Elias, the larger proportion of the land is now in the hands of the Greek convents, acquired through the medium of rayahs or subjects of the Porte, as the Turkish law is not yet repealed which prohibits foreigners from purchasing land in their own names. Our path lay along the base of the hills on which stands the village El Malakh, and which form the western boundary of the valley of Rephaim. After an hour's ride through a country thickly planted with olive trees, among which multitudes of beautiful wild flowers were beginning to spring up, we entered the Wadi Werde (the Valley of Roses), situated at the south-west extremity of the plain of Rephaim, where the cultivation is more carefully attended to than in any other place I met with in Palestine. The whole district is divided into oliveyards, enclosed with walls, and thickly planted between the trees with rose bushes, the fresh buds of which, just bursting into bright green leaves, formed a delightful contrast with the sombre ashy-coloured leaves of the olive. The roses are cultivated for the sake of their flowers, which are extensively used in the manufacture of the attar of roses, so celebrated as a perfume throughout the East. Mrs Gobat, and others in Jerusalem, described this wadi as being one of the most delightful places in the vicinity during the summer months from the fragrance imparted to the air by their blossoms; and, from the immense quantity of plants, I can well believe it to be so. The path down the wadi is in the bed of the torrent until we reach the Wadi Hannieh, which is a continuation of it, when the road ascends the hill to the south and passes by Ain Yalo, a fountain by the side of which some broken columns of grey granite lie scattered about, and the ruins of what was once a church. Down this Wadi Hannieh lies the most direct road to Gaza, about a day and a-half's journey from Jerusalem, and it is very probable that by it the Ethiopian eunuch journeyed when Philip the Evangelist accosted him. Monkish tradition never stops to reason; and accordingly this fountain disputes with another farther down, called Ain Hanir, the honour of having furnished the water for his baptism, although the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles, lends no countenance to the idea that the baptism took place within two hours' ride of Jerusalem, which it must have been if at



Yalo, or three hours' ride if at Hanir, for it was only in the neighbourhood of Gaza that Philip joined the chariot. Admitting, therefore, the probability of the Ethiopian having travelled this way, the place of his baptism must be sought for at least a day's journey farther to the southwest. On my return I kept along the bed of the torrent in the bottom of the wadi, and observed the ruins of a considerable village just below the fountain, which had been hidden from the path above by the olive trees.

After leaving Ain Yalo, we again descended into the bottom of the valley, and at the distance of half an hour from it, came to the entrance of a branch wadi, which falls into Hannieh from the south. Leaving the latter, we followed up this smaller one, at the head of which Beitir is situated, and another half hour brought us to Ain Hanir, which supplies a much more copious stream than Ain Yalo. There are many ruins around, some of which are evidently more modern than the foundations on which they have been raised. Sepulchral caves are found in the face of the rocks close by, and in a field directly opposite the fountain are the ruins of an edifice, which probably was a church, with two granite pillars still standing. Before us, about a couple of miles distant, lay the village of Beitir, the ancient *Bether*; and the hills around us were 'the mountains of Bether,' which Solomon celebrates in his Song as the haunts of the roe and the young hart.—Cant. ii. 17. They are considerably higher than any in the immediate vicinity of Jerusalem, and are streaked horizontally by the strata of cretaceous rock which intersect the green grass that at this season covers them to the top. The snow, which had fallen two days before, still remained in large patches on these hills, and made them look very bleak and cold. The day on which we made this excursion was a Friday (the Mohammedan Sabbath); and, unfortunately, from some delay in getting our horses ready, the gate was shut before we could get out of the city, so that we could not set out until after one o'clock. The provoking consequence of this *contretemps* was, that although within a couple of miles of Beitir, we were obliged to turn our horses' heads again towards Jerusalem without visiting it. I was most anxious to have done so, on account of the celebrity it has acquired, as the last stronghold which the Romans, under Adrian, wrested from the revolted Jews, after a three years' desperate defence. It was after the capture of Bether that the prisoners were sold as slaves at a great public mart, held under the Oak of Abraham, near Hebron. The merit of bringing to light the position of Bether, after having been lost sight of for centuries, belongs to the Rev. Mr Williams, who explored it in 1843. He discovered the remains of part of the

wall which surrounded the hill, two ruined towers, and a fosse, artificially cut between it and the hill, behind the modern village. From Ain Hanir we could distinguish the modern village, and the hill on which the ancient town stood.

Having reached the Wadi Werde again on our return, instead of following the path which leads to the Convent of the Cross, we kept along the southern side of the Valley of Rephaim, and got into the Bethlehem road at the well of the Magi. In doing so, we passed through two modern villages; that farthest west bearing the name of es Sarefát,—a Sarepta, but not that of the Prophet Elias; and the other, that of Beit Safáfa. This latter village, though unknown in Bible history, is yet a deeply interesting locality, from an episode in the life of one of the most renowned conquerors the world ever witnessed, which occurred there. Josephus informs us, that while Alexander the Great was besieging Tyre, he sent to the High Priest Jaddus, requiring him to supply the Macedonian army with provisions,—but received for reply, that the High Priest had sworn allegiance to Darius, and could not break his oath. This greatly incensed Alexander, who, after having taken Tyre and Gaza, marched his army, probably by the Wadi Hanníh, towards Jerusalem, to execute the threat of vengeance he had hurled against the priest. Hearing of the conqueror's approach, Jaddus betook himself by sacrifice and prayer to God; and 'the night after the sacrifice,' says the historian, 'in his sleep he was admonished by God in a dream to take courage, and that he should go and meet Alexander without fear of danger, relying on His providence. As soon as he heard that Alexander was drawing near the city, he went out, accompanied by the priests and a great number of the citizens, to a certain place called Sapha (which signifies a prospect, for from thence may be seen both Jerusalem and the Temple').<sup>1</sup> The result is well known. Alexander's generals were confounded to see him prostrate himself before the high priest; and, in explanation, he told them that he had had a dream at Dio in Macedonia, in which the high priest appeared to him, and encouraged him to undertake the war against the Persians; and that in thus prostrating himself he worshipped not the priest, but the God whom he served. The day of his entrance into Jerusalem was a day of jubilee, instead of mourning, for its inhabitants; and the Macedonian granted them extraordinary privileges. This village of Safáfa is the place where this event occurred; and we tested the perfect accuracy of Josephus' description, for we remarked

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Antiq. Lib. xi. cap. 8.

at the time that, from a point about a quarter of a mile beyond the village, there is the finest view of Jerusalem which can be obtained from the south or west. This excursion to Beitir is one of the most interesting in point of scenery, as well as of association, in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem; and as travellers seldom make it, I recommend it as one which ought not to be omitted. About half a mile to the east of the well of the Magi, there is a hill which may be visited on returning by the path now indicated, as it involves only the loss of a quarter of an hour, and from its summit a view can be had both of Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the same time.

The last excursion I made in the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem was in company with Mrs Gobat, to Ain Lifta: and I mention it here, because a party starting early can accomplish it easily on the same day they visit Beitir. It lies little more than half an hour to the west north-west of the city. I had two objects in view in this ride; first, to see the olive grove in which the Bishop and his family pitch their tents in summer; and next, to see the fountain, which is now recognised as 'the fountain of the water of Nephtoah,' mentioned by Joshua as one of the landmarks in the marches between the territories of Judah and Benjamin.—Josh. xv. 9. Dr Robinson, following Reland, erroneously places Nephtoah between Bethlehem and Anathoth.—that is, somewhere to the east of Jerusalem: because it is so placed (or at least Nephtoah is) in an enumeration of the Jews who returned with Zerubbabel from the Babylonish captivity in Ezra and Nehemiah.—Ezra ii. 22; Nehem. vii. 26. But a glance at Joshua xv. 8 must convince us, that wherever the actual locality may be found, the direction, beyond all question, is to the west of Jerusalem; for after describing the border of Benjamin as reaching the well of En Rogel, it is expressly stated to have gone up the Valley of the Son of Hinnom unto the south side of the Jebusite (Jerusalem), and 'to the top of the mountain that lieth before the Valley of Hinnom westward; and the border was drawn from the top of the hill unto the fountain of the waters of Nephtoah.'

After riding along the Yaffa road for about twenty minutes, and meeting a company of English travellers arriving, we struck off over a rocky rising ground to the north-west, and in ten minutes entered a dense olive grove, which must afford a delightful shelter during the scorching heat of summer. This is the Bishop's camping ground during the unhealthy season in the city; and his establishment consists of four or five tents. An annual rent is paid to the proprietor for the right of *squatting*, for which he engages to maintain a sufficient

watch to protect the family from thievish depredation on the part of the fellahin, and from more formidable assaults on the part of the wild Bedouins. I could not help wishing that I might have an opportunity of visiting them here at some future day, and witnessing the style of their patriarchal *menage*. Five minutes' ride from thence brought us to the edge of a deep narrow wadi; and on the opposite side, straight before us, was Ain Lifta, the waters of which seemed to issue out of the hill behind, and fall into a small pool, formed in an arcade or porch cut out of the rock. The village itself was not visible from where I stood, on account of a projecting part of the wadi. There was not time to descend to it, as we had set out for our ride only an hour and a half before sunset, after my return from exploring the drain on Ophel leading up to the Temple, and I had no mind to expose Mrs Gobat to an hour's delay while the keys of the city gate were being brought up from the Governor's house.

On the morning of the 6th March, being favoured with a fine day, Miss Chesney and I set out at eight o'clock, under the guidance of Mr Rogers, H. M. Vice-Consul at Khaifa, to visit Nebi Samwil, and other localities to the north of Jerusalem. As usual, we left the city by the Yaffa Gate, and passing among a score of poor lepers, who sat begging by the wayside, followed the foundations of the wall of Agrippa, as far as they extended, to the north-west. We then struck across the head of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and passing onwards, arrived in half an hour after leaving the gate at a beautiful tomb cut out in the rocks a few yards to the right of our path, on the slope which leads down into Wadi Beit Hanina. The portal is decorated with wreaths and flowers, which are in a state of excellent preservation. It goes by the name of the Tomb of the Judges; and with the exception of the Tomb of the Prophets on the Mount of Olives, it is the most capacious of all the tombs in the vicinity of the city. There are three chambers on a level with the entrance, and two below, to which there is a descent by steps, and these contain in all sixty niches for dead bodies. It is more than probable that other subterranean chambers exist, though the entrance to them is now choked up with rubbish. From the number of these niches, as well as from the ornamental work on the outside, it is certain that this must have been a sepulchre intended for members of some public body; and Dr Robinson's supposition is probably the correct one, that it was the tomb to which were committed the bodies of those who were members of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

From thence we descended into the Wadi Beit Hanina, and continued our course along it for some time. In an hour after leaving

Jerusalem we crossed a small rivulet running into it from the north, which Mr Rogers told us monkish tradition points out as the brook from whence the youthful David took the pebbles with which he smote Goliath of Gath. It is probable, however, that that event took place farther to the south-west, in the country bordering on the land of the Philistines, which we had seen from Beit Zakariyah. From this place we had another hour's ride up the steep side of the hill on which Nebi Samwil stands, and at ten o'clock dismounted within the courtyard of its neglected mosque. This mosque was a Christian church built by the Crusaders over what they believed to be the tomb of Samuel the Prophet, as in their day this place was reckoned the Ramah where he dwelt. Leaving our horses in the charge of my dragoman, and a múkhari who did duty as Miss Chesney's groom, we entered the mosque, examined the prophet's tomb, and ascended to the minaret across the flat roof, without seeing a soul either belonging to the establishment or to the village. By and by we were joined by an old woman, the *custode* of the place, who pointed out the numerous villages and ruined places in sight. The hill on which the village and mosque stand is the highest ground in all the country round, and the view from the minaret was therefore very commanding. To one already familiar with the scenery from the Mount of Olives and other places to the south of Jerusalem, the most interesting general view obtained from it is towards the north-west. There, far away below us, but clear and distinct, lay the plain of Sharon, with the town of Ramleh, supposed by some to be Arimathæa, and Lúð, the Lydda of the New Testament, where Dorcas dwelt; and in the midst of the sand hills along the shore, the town of Yaffa, the ancient Joppa, where Jonas fled to escape his solemn embassy to Nineveh, and where Peter was divinely taught in the house of Simon the tanner to cast his Jewish prejudices to the wind, and to welcome the Gentiles into the Church of God. At the time I gazed on these places from the minaret of Nebi Samwil, I fully expected to visit them all; but the long continuance of dreary rain, hail, and snow, made it impossible to accomplish this project without thwarting ministerial arrangements, which depended on my return to Italy by the end of April. I feel therefore now much satisfaction in the clear, though distant view, which I had of the Valley of Sharon and all its contents from Nebi Samwil; and this hint may be useful to some who are equally unfortunate in weather during their visit to El Khuds, or who are too much pressed for time to descend to the plain.

Looking westward, we had in sight the villages of Zuréek and

Kebébeh, supposed to be the village of Emmaus. To the south-west were El Kustúl and Soba. To the south. Beit Ikša. Lifta (Nephtoah), Ain Kharim, supposed by some to have been the birth-place of John the Baptist; and Deir Yessen, the convent of Mar Elias, and Bethlehem in the far distance. Turning to the south-east, the most prominent objects were Jerusalem, the Mount of Olives and Scopus, with a distant view of the mountains of Moab. To the east were Beit Hanína, and on a hill not far from Jerusalem, to the left of the Nablous road, the village of Sahafát, supposed to mark the site of the priestly city of Nob, destroyed by Saul on account of the temporary succour which the fugitive David received from Abimelech the priest. To the north-east lay Kulúndieh, Bir Nebála, Jedíreh er Ram. Geba, Taiyíbeh, a village on the edge of the mountains of Ephraim, inhabited by Christians; and in the same direction, Rummún, the rock Rimmon, to which in the days of the Judges the remnant of Benjamin betook themselves for safety.—Judges xx. 45. To complete the panoramic circle, we had on the north, immediately below Nebi Samwíl, a wide valley, towards the eastern extremity of which rises an isolated hill resembling in shape a colossal lamprey, on which stands the village of El Jíb; and on the mountains beyond it, Ram-Allah, Beireh, and Beit Unía where there is a large ancient pool, the waters of which we could see glancing in the sun from our high perch. Just beyond this latter village the situation of Beit Ur el Föka (the upper Bethhoron) was pointed out. Any one looking on a map of Palestine will perceive at a glance how extensive this view from Nebi Samwíl is, and yet, strange to say, though there were between twenty and thirty English travellers in Jerusalem during the last fortnight of my stay, none had the curiosity to visit this place but ourselves. From it we saw the hills of the tribe of Judah to the south, and the mountains of Ephraim to the north. Moreover, it stands almost in the centre of the territory of Benjamin breadthwise; so that, while we had Jerusalem, and Lifta, and Bethlehem in sight, pointing out the direction of three of its southern landmarks, viz., En Rogel, Nephtoah, and Zelzah, we had also in sight Beíreh, the ancient *Beer* or *Beeroth*, which is within an hour of Bethel and Beit Ur (Bethhoron), which indicate with tolerable exactness the line of the northern marches between it and Ephraim.—Josh. xviii. 13, compared with Josh. xvi. 1-3.

I have already mentioned that the Crusaders fixed on this place as the Ramah or Ramathaim Zophim of Samuel; but an attentive examination of the passage of Scripture in which Saul's journey in search

of his father's asses is given, will show that Ramah could not possibly have lain in this direction, for it is clear that Saul was unacquainted with the prophet's place of residence till his servant informed him of it, which could not have been the case had it been at Nebi Samwil, a town within a couple of hours' ride of his own residence in Gibeah.—1 Samuel ix.

There are abundant evidences in and around the modern village, such as foundations laid with huge stones, cisterns, artificial levelling of the rocks, and ancient sepulchres, that this was in former days a place of note. But which of the towns of Benjamin stood here? Dr Robinson suggests that this was the site of Mizpeh, the meaning of which is, a watch tower, a place of look-out, and no situation in the neighbourhood could so exactly correspond with the meaning of the name. In the book of Nehemiah, the people of Mizpeh and Gibeon are associated together in building a portion of the wall of Jerusalem, and El Jib, which lies immediately below the hill in the valley to the north, is the ancient Gibeon. This, then, probably was the place where the tribes gathered together to wage a war of extermination against Benjamin; where Samuel judged the people; where Saul was chosen king; and where Gedaliah, the governor appointed by the king of Babylon immediately after the captivity, was treacherously slain by Ishmael, one of the Princes of the royal family of David, probably with the view of establishing himself on the throne by the assistance of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.—Judges xx. 1; 1 Samuel vii. 6, x. 17; 2 Kings xxv. 23. It would appear, however, from the writings of Epiphanius,<sup>1</sup> that in his day the hill went by the name of the Mountain of Gibeon; thus giving rise to a question whether 'the great high place' in Gibeon, to which Solomon came after his accession to the throne to pray before the Lord and to offer up sacrifices, may not have been on this hill. It may have been in the immediate vicinity of Mizpeh, but as we elsewhere read in Scripture of high places in the *Valley* of the Son of Hinnom, it is not at all necessary to suppose that the tabernacle and altar of sacrifice stood at that time upon a hill.

Having satisfied the old lady who acted as our *cicerone*, we got to saddle once more, descended by a short but very steep path into the valley already referred to, and crossing it in a north-easterly direction, passed close to the base of the singular isolated hill on which the

<sup>1</sup> Epiphanius, when speaking of the Mount of Olives as the highest of those around Jerusalem, makes an exception in favour of 'Mount Gibeon, which is eight miles distant, and is much higher than it.' Nebi Samwil alone corresponds with this description. Reland. Palest., p. 339.

village of El Jib is situated. I know nothing which can convey an impression of its shape more correctly than the lamprey-shell to which I have already compared it. It is formed of regular layers of limestone, each successive one diminishing in size as it rises, and the terraces thus formed are planted with olive trees, and sown with corn or lentils. There can be no doubt that this is the Gibeon whose inhabitants cunningly got the better of Joshua, and secured for themselves, as strangers from a distance, an offensive and defensive alliance with Israel. Josephus indicates its position with tolerable accuracy when he places it in the neighbourhood of Bethhoron, and fifty stadia from Jerusalem.<sup>1</sup> In another place he makes it forty stadia; but this may easily be reconciled if we understand him as referring in the one case to its distance by the nearest road over the Ghebel Nebi Samwil, and in the other, by the high road to Gaza, which passed by Gibeon, as it still does by El Jib. The village is a small one, and we did not ascend the hill to visit it, which I now very much regret, as besides an ancient fountain, there is still to be seen the reservoir on each side of which Abner and Joab sat, while a gladiatorial exhibition took place between six of their followers on either side.—2 Sam. ii. 13. Gibeon was given to the priests as one of the Levitical cities out of the tribe of Benjamin (Josh. xxi. 17); and next to Shiloh it is celebrated as the place where the Tabernacle stood for many years, and where Solomon, in answer to his prayer, received from God the promise of wisdom and knowledge.—2 Chron. i. 3-13. But the event for which of all others Gibeon is most celebrated, was the miracle which Joshua was enabled to perform there in lengthening out the day while he fought with the kings of the Canaanites in defence of his new allies the Gibeonites. That large valley, now beautifully green with corn, is the Valley of Ajalon. It is admirably adapted for a battle-field; and it was with reference to these two places that Joshua, having prayed to the Lord, issued his command, ‘Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon, and thou, Moon, in the Valley of Ajalon.—Josh. x. 12. It may well be conceived with what deep interest we gazed on this most remarkable of all battle-fields; indeed, I believe it was chiefly owing to the engrossing interest which we felt in it, that we considered a visit to the village itself as of minor importance. The rocks around, however, gave ample evidence both of extensive quarrying operations, and of the care with which suitable places of sepulture had been provided for the dead by its ancient inhabitants. By the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud., Lib. ii. cap. 19.



road which passes this way, and goes down by Bethhoron to Lydda and the plain, the Apostle Paul most probably passed, when, escorted by a troop of Roman cavalry, he was removed to Cæsarea by night, to escape the plot which the Jews had laid to take his life.—Acts xxiii. 32.

In riding along the path which leads from hence towards Er Ram, we observed for the first time a plant, with which we became afterwards very familiar, and which merits a passing notice. A circle of broad green leaves, resembling those of the mangel wurzel, rested on the ground, having within a heart of smaller leaves, from the midst of which, on a stalk not more than a couple of inches high, grew a cluster of green balls, in shape, size, and colour exactly like potato apples. We were told that it rarely grows to a larger size. These apples, when ripe, become yellow, and have a most delicious fragrance; so that they are put in wardrobes to give a perfume to napery and clothes. This plant is the *mandrake*. It was the pleasant smell of its apples which tempted Rachel; and with them Leah bought her own husband's company from her better loved and jealous sister. That they were valuable only for their perfume seems confirmed by the allusion Solomon makes to them in the Song, '*The mandrakes give a smell, and at our gates are all manner of pleasant fruits,*' etc.—Cant. vii. 13. The apples, however, had no smell at the time we saw them; but as specimens of a plant, the use of which had often exceedingly puzzled me, I brought away some of them, which are still in my possession, but have now *crined* into the size of rose hips. The nourishment of the plant seems to go almost wholly to the root. I have heard of roots being dug up five feet long; and I saw in Dr Barclay's house a piece of one, about the thickness of a man's arm, which was within an inch or two of three feet in length. By that mandrake root there hangs a curious tale. A young Scotchman, whom I met only once in the street, had been for some time in Jerusalem studying very minutely its localities and the surrounding country. Having had the mandrake plant pointed out to him—under an impression, which he shared in common with many others, that it was a vegetable fit for food—he resolved to cook it and make a repast upon it. Finding a promising plant in the course of his perambulations, he set to work, dug, grubbed, and excavated with infinite toil and patience, until he had not only possessed himself of the specimen alluded to, but of other large portions besides. Hastening home, with visions of a glorious discovery in the gastronomic line, he put a portion in a pot to boil; and served up with Spartan sauce, partook of it freely. I

am not in a condition to affirm whether it was savoury to the palate or not; but within a short time after he had partaken of it, Drs Sim and Barclay were called *d'urgence*, and found the unfortunate experimenter in a state of violent delirium. All sorts of horrible visions attacked him; among the rest, perceiving the silver watch-chain round his neck, he imagined it was a serpent, and dashed watch and chain precipitately to the ground. His case excited some alarm on the part of his medical attendants, as it was evident he had eaten some poisonous substance; and even after the true state of the case was known and the proper remedies applied, it was some days before he was completely restored. Many a hearty laugh the Barclays, Dr Sim, and I had over the dinner on mandrakes; and as my enterprising countryman claims the honour of making the experiment, I hereby warn all and sundry from infringing his patent by a repetition of it.

About half an hour distant from El Jib, after passing down a narrow wadi running to the east, we ascended another hill riddled with tombs, on which stands the modern village of Kulúndieh, which we had seen from the minaret of Nebi Samwil. This village is small and miserably poor, and no traces of Jewish buildings can be seen about it; but there is a large ancient pool still filled with water, and a deep well cut in the rock, which show that it has a history if we could only get at it. This place has not been identified as yet with any ancient town, but as it is within a couple of miles of El Jib, it may perhaps be the site of Cephireh, which is mentioned by Joshua as one of the four cities which belonged to the Gibeonites.—Joshua ix. 17. By the side of the ancient well we sat down to lunch, and while so engaged were joined by Mr Graham, who had been prevented from setting out with us in the morning. Another quarter of an hour's ride brought us to the great Nablous road, which, be it known, is simply a bridle path, and one of the roughest which any unfortunate animal was ever condemned to travel. On this occasion we had only to cross it; and after riding in the same north-easterly direction for ten minutes more, we came to another village upon a rising ground called Er Ram, the RAMAH of Benjamin, but certainly not the residence of Samuel. It was this city which Baasha, King of Israel, fortified after having taken it, that he 'might not suffer any to go out or to come in to Asa;' and the stones of which the King of Judah afterwards made his people carry away that he might fortify Geba and Mizpeh with them.—1 Kings xv. 17, 22. A few cisterns cut in the rock, and two or three prostrate granite pillars, are all that tell of ancient times; but in the middle of the village are the ruins of a church which probably dates from the

days of the Crusades. Although the name is unchanged, so completely were travellers satisfied with the monkish tradition about Nebi Samwíl, that this place remained unnoticed until Dr Robinson dragged it from its obscurity. There is an extensive view from this place; but it is over bare and barren hills, which presented no attractive features. The villages of Deir Diwán, Deir Jareéd, and Taiyíbeh were seen on the opposite side of a deep wadi running towards the plain of Jordan; but excepting these, and a conical *tell* to the south on the way to Jerusalem called Tel el Ful, there was nothing in the landscape which was not embraced in the view from Nebi Samwíl.

To the north-east of Er Ram, the ground, though still high and broken by wavy eminences, begins to shelve gradually towards the plain of Jordan. Riding at a brisk pace, we arrived in three quarters of an hour at another village called Geba, around which there are more traces of an ancient town than in either of those we had already passed. These, however, consist only in a greater number of cisterns and sepulchral caves; for I observed no ruins worth speaking of, except a tower in the middle of the village. This village lies within a hundred feet of the edge of the deep wadi which we had skirted since leaving er Ram. To get a good view of it, we were obliged to leap our horses up a stone fence into an oliveyard, on getting to the top of which I became entangled in the branches of an overhanging fig tree, and got a most uncomfortable *spill*, besides being well laughed at as a matter of course by my companions, for not keeping a brighter look out ahead. The truth is, there was a village right opposite us on the other side of the wadi, which at that moment had rivetted all my attention, so that I had not observed the fig tree. The Sheikh of Geba had called it Múkhmas. It was the Michmash of Scripture, which in the time of Saul the Philistines had garrisoned, and where the gallant Jonathan, with no other attendant than his armour-bearer, had slain some of the enemy, and put the rest to flight. I do not remember ever to have felt so powerful a conviction of the scrupulous truthfulness and graphic power of the Holy Scriptures in describing scenery, as came over my heart while I gazed on that scene. It was as if a fresh evidence of their inspiration had suddenly been put into my hands.

The deep valley is now called Wadi es Suweinit, and in its bottom there rise two conical hills nearly opposite one another, leaving but a very narrow passage in the middle between them. They bear no distinctive names now, at least the Sheikh knew none; but in Jonathan's day one was called Bozez, and the other Sench (1 Samuel xiv. 4. 5); and it

is impossible to give a more accurate description of them than is contained in these words,—‘The fore-front of the one was situated northward over against Michmash, and the other southward over against Gibeah.’ Under their shelter the gallant youths crept unobserved, until they came within hail of the Philistine garrison. I felt my visit to this place deeply interesting, not only from its connection with the high-minded and chivalrous son of Saul, but likewise from the light it throws on another passage of Scripture. This Wadi Suweinit is without doubt ‘the passage’ which the Prophet Isaiah speaks of at Michmash, when he describes in most graphic language the approach of the Assyrian host to Jerusalem. ‘He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages: They are gone over *the passage*; they have taken up their lodging at Geba.’—Isaiah x. 28, 29. Their approach with chariots through some of the wadis leading up from Jordan towards Nablous (by which both Abraham and Jacob made their entrance into the land) would be very easy. From thence they pursued their march to Aiath, no doubt the same as the Ai or Hai which Joshua destroyed; and, arriving at Michmash, they laid up their chariots there, as the depth of the valley, and the steepness of its banks, made it impossible to take them across it. In light marching order they then went over ‘the passage,’ and took up their lodgings at Geba. It is unnecessary to pursue further at present his description of the fear and consternation produced at Ramah, and other places nearer Jerusalem, by their approach.

It will be observed that, in the passages quoted above, the place where we were standing is spoken of indifferently as Geba and Gibeah; for there can be no doubt that in them both names apply to the same locality; yet these are names of two distinct cities of the tribe of Benjamin, and the difficulty is to determine which of these is represented by the modern Geba. Dr Robinson, with some hesitation, decides in favour of Gibeah, the city of Saul, simply because he believes from the mention made of it in 1 Sam. xiv. that that town lay on the edge of the valley, and he could find no trace of it between Geba and er Ram. He acknowledges, however, that the modern name corresponds directly with Geba. On that account, as well as from the position in which Isaiah places it, I should have no hesitation in at once deciding that this is the ancient Geba, even though there were no other considerations to strengthen this conclusion. But such are not wanting. In the Hebrew, the names of these towns are spelt invariably in such a way as to be easily distinguished from one another, and it is simply

from an oversight on the part of our translators that any doubt has arisen on the subject; for in the passage quoted from 1 Sam. xiv. 5. the name, as written in the Hebrew text, is not *Gibeah*, but *Geba*, the identical word used by Isaiah.<sup>1</sup> Besides, there is another passage of Scripture which proves beyond all doubt that Gibeah of Benjamin must have been much nearer Jerusalem than Geba. In the account given of the Levite's journey with his wife from Bethlehem towards Mount Ephraim in Judges xix., two things are incontrovertibly established. The first is, that Gibeah and Ramah both lay close to the highway leading north from Jerusalem towards Bethel, as we have seen Er Ram does to this day; the other is, that on that line of road Gibeah was nearer to Jerusalem than Ramah, whereas Geba lies in a line with Er Ram, but three quarters of an hour beyond it to the east, or, in other words, more than an hour's journey to the right of the Nablous road. Evening was fast closing in, when the Levite arrived at Jerusalem; but rather than lodge among the Canaanites, he resolved to push forward to one of the towns belonging to the children of Israel in the neighbourhood, either Gibeah or Ramah; and the failing light compelled him to stop at the first of these he came to, which was Gibeah. So much we gather from Scripture. But Josephus, in recounting the same incident, gives us the exact distance of Gibeah from Jerusalem. 'As they came near to Jerusalem,' he says, 'having then travelled *above thirty furlongs* (from Bethlehem), the servant advised them to take up their lodgings there. . . This advice did not please the Levite; . . . he therefore judged it safer to journey *twenty furlongs farther*, and lodge in some city of the Israelites. Hav-

<sup>1</sup> In Joshua xviii. 24-28, Gibeon, Gaba, and Gibeah, are all enumerated as separate towns belonging to the tribe of Benjamin, and are written thus: גִּבְעוֹן; גִּבְעָה or גִּבְעָה; and גִּבְעָה. The distinction between Gibeah and Geba is properly made in our Version in 1 Samuel xiii. 2d and 3d verses, but they are again confounded in the 15th and 16th verses. Following the Hebrew text, it appears, that while Saul with an army held Michmash, Jonathan his son, with another, remained in his father's city of Gibeah, and from thence made an attack upon the Philistines, who at that time had a garrison in Geba. The Philistines collecting in great force to avenge the insult, made it necessary for Saul to gather together all the fighting men of Israel; and for this purpose, withdrawing from Michmash, he went down to Gilgal in the plain below. During his absence, the Philistines occupied Michmash, which he had abandoned. After the folly of which he was guilty in offering up sacrifice without waiting for Samuel, we are told the prophet went up to *Gibeah* of Benjamin; but (according to the Hebrew text) Saul and Jonathan, with the army of Israel, went up, as one would naturally expect, to *Geba* of Benjamin. where they were exactly opposite the foe.

ing taken this resolution, they pursued their journey, and came at last to Gaba or Gibeah, a town of the tribe of Benjamin.<sup>1</sup> Reland also, quoting from 'Paschal's Chronicles,' mentions a place called Gabaoth at twenty stadia from Jerusalem, equal in English measurement to two miles and three quarters.<sup>2</sup> Now, about an hour's slow ride from the Damascus Gate, there is about five minutes to the right of the Nablous road a high conical hill called Tel el Fúl, 'the Hill of Beans,' with ancient remains, which would correspond very well with the distance of Gibeah from Jerusalem, as given by Josephus. This site was first suggested to me by Dr Barclay, though at that time I was inclined to believe with Robinson that Geba was the first royal city of Israel. Further consideration of the subject has convinced me that Dr Barclay is right, and that at Tel el Fúl, or in its neighbourhood, we must look for the Gibeah of Benjamin.

Leaving Geba, we took a south-easterly direction to reach a village called Hísmeh, on a hill opposite. In doing so, we had to make a long descent into Wadi Ain Kiskheh, which a little lower down assumes the name of Wadi Fáhreh, and then falls into another called Wadi Fúor, where there are several intermittent springs like that of Siloam. From these springs the Nahr el Kelt (the Brook Cherith) takes its rise, and runs down by the side of the modern Jericho. Dr Barclay had often visited them, and described their waters as rising and falling periodically at intervals of ten minutes. He gave me an amusing account of his first visit. An Arab, from the neighbourhood, took him to the fountain, and pretending to be a conjuror, asked him if he would like to see the waters rise in the fountain, as by singing a particular song he could make them do so. Unaware of the peculiarity of the fountain, the Doctor shook his head in token of incredulity, but the Arab, no-ways disheartened, began to sing; and sure enough, just as he ceased, the water bubbled up in considerable volume. After allowing the ordinary time for the flow, the conjuror professed his ability to make it descend again by another song, which he commenced and finished with signal success. As the period once more drew near for the flux, he asked if he should like to have the operation repeated, but Dr Barclay was 'a sight too smart' for him. Having timed, with his watch, the interval between the first flow and ebb, he replied, 'No, no, friend! it is my turn to bring it now; I can do so with this watch;' which accordingly he did, stating the moment the rise would take place, to the complete bewilderment of the poor conjuror. I

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. v., cap. 2.

Reland. Palest., p. 770.

regretted not having it in my power to visit the source of the Brook Cherith.

In the Wadi Ain Kiskheh, from which I have made a short digression, we found four isolated masses of building from 50 to 100 feet in length, which at first I supposed must have been the walls of a town or fortress. One faced the south, and two the north-east, and they consisted of three or four courses of immense blocks of roughly-dressed stone, twelve and fifteen feet in length, and six feet in height. The inside of these walls is not built with large stones, nor finished with the same care as the outside, and the sides are left in an unfinished and rugged state. Some Arabs who lived in the valley told us that they bore the name of Kubúr Ibn Israíl. 'The Graves of the Children of Israel.' I have never seen any notice taken of these curious remains in the writings of former travellers; and unless some battle with the Canaanites had taken place in this neighbourhood on their first entrance into the land, it is difficult to conceive how so quiet and remote a valley should have supplied graves on such a scale to the children of Israel.

Ascending the hill on which Hísmeh stands, we passed a large cave where several Arab families had taken up their abode, and then leaving the village to the left as the sun was getting towards the horizon, and we had the fear of the closed gates of Jerusalem before our eyes, we struck through corn-fields right across the country, towards a village lying on another hill farther south called Anáta. Hísmeh bears no resemblance to any ancient name of the tribe of Benjamin; but I have a strong impression from its vicinity to Anáta, and from the direction which the Assyrian army is described as taking in its approach to Jerusalem, that it occupies the site of GALLIM mentioned in Isaiah x. 30. In passing from it to Anáta, we bought from a fella, through whose corn-fields we were galloping at the time, some fossil shark's teeth, which he said were found in considerable numbers in the limestone rocks around. Anáta is a poor little village, resembling in size and construction those which we had already visited; and there are no remains of antiquity about it. By its associations, however, it is a most interesting place. It is the ANATHOTH of Scripture, the birth-place and home of the Prophet Jeremiah, on account of a suspicion of his desire to return to which, during the last crisis in Jerusalem, before it fell under Nebuchadnezzar, he was shut up in prison. 'Poor Anathoth' is mentioned in immediate connection with Gallim in the prophecy referred to above. There is an extensive view from it in the direction of the Jordan and Dead Sea. It lies about six

miles north-east of El Khuds; and after crossing two more wadis, and another hill from which the best view is had of the eastern side of the Mount of Olives, we gained the ridge of Scopus about half an hour before sunset, where a most lovely view of the city awaited us. I have already referred to this view; but embrace this opportunity, after having taken the reader a complete circuit round Jerusalem, of again stating my conviction that, for general effect, there is no view that can compare with this one; as, for the topography of the city, there is none that can equal that from the top of its northern wall, a few feet to the east of the Damascus gate. After a ride of 35 miles, we reached the gates just at sunset, much beholden to Mr Rogers for the guidance and information he had afforded us.

To saddle once more! kind reader, if you are not afraid of one of the most drenching days of rain which I ever was exposed to. The party you join is the same as on the last occasion, only now under the guidance of Dr Barclay, who kindly volunteered to show us a tomb he had discovered in a secluded valley a little to the west of the Nablous road. My native land cannot boast a monopoly of Scotch mist, for Jerusalem has its own full share of it; but we set out from the Damascus Gate, in the hope that it might clear away before noon. Vain hope! ere we reached the Birket Mamilla, to which we rode first, in order to examine the tomb of the royal Idumean family, we were all as wet as if we had been dragged through the pool; but, as Miss Chesney preferred a wetting to missing a sight of the tomb, we bade defiance to the weather. Retracing our steps from the Pool of Gihon, and passing the mounds of ashes and the tombs of the kings, we crossed the Valley of Jehoshaphat on the paved Roman causeway by which the Nablous road is carried over it. Here, in the midst of a blinding torrent of rain and sleet, we met a grand cavalcade composed of Turkish *Huskars*, and Sheikhs with their attendants, who formed the escort of a Turkish colonel arriving from Damascus. They were firing guns, and chasing one another on horseback, as if it were one of the loveliest days of spring, in honour of a safe arrival at the end of their journey. Mounting the hill on the opposite side of the wadi, we struck off through a narrow glen to the north before reaching its summit. There were tombs in the rocks on either side, in almost as great abundance as in the rocky sides of Hinnom, to the south of the city, and we passed among many ruined buildings, which we had not time, nor indeed inclination in the circumstances to examine. This glen led us gradually down into an extensive valley running to the westward, which I suppose was the Wadi Beit Hanina; but a thick



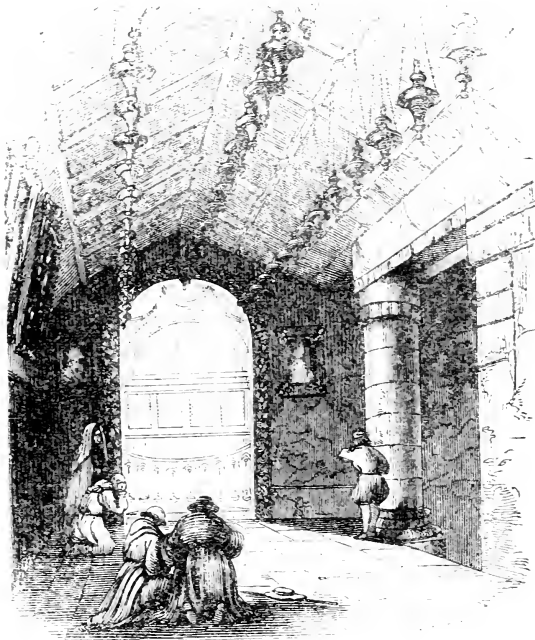
mist working up from the Mediterranean made it impossible to take any correct bearings. While toiling through the corn-fields in the bottom, we descried three gazelles on a projecting crag in front, which no sooner caught sight of us, than they fled with prodigious haste up the hill, followed by the Doctor's dog. In one of these projecting rocks on the northern side of this wadi, was the tomb in search of which we came, and it yields in beauty and richness of sculpture to none of those we had previously seen. When in its entire state, there has been a portico in front cut out of the rock, much of which is now broken away. Enough, however, remains at either side to show what it has been, and it is ornamented with alternate stars and wreaths of roses. The front of the tomb within this portico is of solid rock; but it has been chiselled with exquisite care, both horizontally and perpendicularly, so as to give it the appearance of a wall of huge stones bevelled on the edges, and made to fit with the nicest exactitude. So perfect is the deception, that, on approaching it, I was convinced I had before me a perfect specimen of ancient Jewish masonry. The entrance-door has been broken away and enlarged, but above it there are sculptured wreaths and ornaments similar to those on the Tomb of the Kings. Passing through the doorway, we found ourselves in a large chamber about twenty feet square, on three sides of which there are many niches for the reception of the dead. At the south-east corner, a large square space has been cut out in the rock for the reception of a sarcophagus, destined no doubt for the head of the family or corporation. In the middle of the northern wall of this chamber, just opposite the entrance-door, there is a low passage eight or ten feet in length leading into an inner chamber, round all the four sides of which there are niches similar to those in the outer one. I neglected to count the number of these receptacles, but there could not be less than thirty.

On the hill above this tomb Dr Barclay told me there were ruins of considerable extent, finer than those usually met with, and many pillars strewed about, which show that at one time it had been a town of some consideration. I was most anxious to ascend the hill to visit it, but the mist had become so thick that, riding single file, we could not see two horses' length before us, and the Doctor fearing lest we should lose our way and wander far from Jerusalem, felt it necessary to refuse. Knowing that the head of the valley was close to the Nablous road, he took his bearings at the tomb, and set out to reach it. The name given to this tomb, and the ruins above it is Massáneh; and within a few minutes ride of it is the village of Shafát, which

Bishop Gobat supposes is the site of Nob. This conjecture is exceedingly probable from its situation in reference to Jerusalem, and the description given of Nob in Isaiah x. as the place where the Assyrian army halted the day before they marched up to the walls. It struck me, from the position of the ruined town in its neighbourhood, and from the resemblance in the name, that Massáneh is probably the modern form of *Madmenah*, which is spoken of in the same prophecy, and that the sepulchre we had just left, which, from its size and decorations, must evidently have been a public one, was that in which Abimelech the high priest was buried, together with the other priests dwelling at Nob, whom Doeg the Edomite slew at Saul's command. I mentioned this to Dr Barclay at the time, and a few days afterwards he told me that he had been thinking over what I had said, and was quite disposed to agree with me; and, when I saw him some months afterwards at Leghorn, I was gratified to learn that, on further reflection, he was convinced I was right in the suggestion I had made.

Having reached the Nablous road, as there seemed little fear of straying upon it, the Doctor proposed that we should ride as far as the Tel el Fúl, which he believed to be the Gibeah of Saul; and the proposal having met with a unanimous consent, we turned to the north, but, as we could scarcely see a couple of yards before us, we soon lost the track, and found ourselves, after half an hour's ride, unexpectedly in the village of Beít Hanína, which was some way to the west of it. From thence we made a fresh start, got on to the road again, and, after half an hour's ride, made out a conical hill with some difficulty through the mist, which proved to be the one we were in search of. There is abundance of broken pottery around, indicating that it had once been occupied by a town; but Miss Chesney and Mr Graham, who rode to the top, observed no ancient remains there, and the mist in which we were enveloped prevented us from exploring the ground round its base. I have already stated the reasons which induce me to believe that Gibeah of Benjamin must be sought for here. On getting back to the road, the mist was so thick that Dr Barclay actually mistook the direction of Jerusalem, and was setting out for Er Ram, and it was with some difficulty that I convinced him we were wrong, by pointing out two or three marks which I had taken before we turned off to visit the hill. We had now the blinding rain and cold wind in our faces, and the horses made slow progress along the path, which had been converted into a fast-flowing stream, so that it took us an hour and a half to ride from Tel el

Ful to the Damascus Gate. We arrived so benumbed that we could scarcely feel the bridles in our hands; and as the Doctor had already suffered from three severe attacks of fever and ague during his residence in Jerusalem. I greatly feared lest he should be the worse for this excursion, but happily he suffered no bad effects.



View of the Nativty.

## CHAPTER X.

## THE JORDAN AND THE DEAD SEA.

WHEN I arrived at Jerusalem, it was with the fixed resolution, after a few days' rest, of setting out to explore the western shore of the Dead Sea throughout its whole extent. I had read M. De Sauley's 'Journey' round it, which for its marvellous discoveries has no rival but the travels of the celebrated Baron Munchausen. Being by no means disposed to follow the example of a gentleman who, while that book was the *rage* at home, declared that 'he was so completely satisfied with it, he would never read any work which called his discoveries in question,' I had resolved to satisfy myself by ocular observation of the soundness of his conclusions. The copy of his book which I had in my possession was the first that had reached Jerusalem, and it produced quite a sensation. A dozen people sent to beg a perusal of it; and the general impression there I found to be one of astonishment, that a party which was reckoned one only of pleasure-seekers should have turned out such diligent explorers of Bible topography, and that their most astounding discoveries should have been kept so profound a secret, that no one in Jerusalem heard of them on their return. Having announced my intention, both Mr Consul Finn and Mr Nicolayson expressed a wish to join me; and accordingly Sheikh Mustafa of Abou Dis, who takes charge of travellers going to Jericho and Mar Saba, and old Hamdán, the Sheikh of the Táamerah Bedouins, were sent for, that contracts might be made with them for the journey. When the morning arrived on which we were to have started the ground was covered a foot deep with snow, and though I hoped for better weather when we had descended into the plain, at 4000 feet lower level, neither of my companions would go. As it turned out, they had decided wisely, for during the next fortnight there was scarcely one fair day. Another party was made up ten days later, which was to consist of Messrs Finn, Graham, Sim, and myself; but singularly enough, the night before we were to

have started, a second snow-storm came on, which lasted for 24 hours. Messrs Finn and Graham now threw up the expedition in disgust; and as I had been already three weeks in Jerusalem, I found that the whole journey I originally proposed would have taken longer time than I could spare, and was reluctantly obliged to abandon it. I was not then aware that M. Van De Velde had already followed closely on M. De Sauley's footsteps, and had ascertained that there was not a brick or a stone laid by human hand where he had discovered the most marvellous of his mare's nests, the ruins of Sodom. Though my expedition failed, I subjoin the agreements made with the Sheikhs for the information of future travellers, as I have neglected to insert them in the chapter which treats of ways and means. The regulation price established at the British Consulate with Sheikh Mustafa is 150 piastres a-head for a three days' journey to Jericho, the Jordan, and the northern end of the Dead Sea, returning by the Convent of Mar Saba, and that fee I subsequently paid him. But, as the two Sheikhs were both to be employed in our journey, it was agreed that they were to take us to Jericho, the Jordan, En Jedy, Ghebel Usdoun (Sodom), and Hebron, for the sum of 1630 piastres, which, at the exchange then current, makes £14. 11s. 8d. sterling. Of that sum we were obliged to pay 300 piastres in advance to Hamdán; and as he waited for us a couple of days in vain on the second occasion, at the head of the Dead Sea, we were obliged to forfeit that sum. Though disappointed of my long journey, I was resolved, even if I should have to travel alone in the midst of snow and rain, to visit the shores of the Dead Sea, and to judge of the value attaching to M. De Sauley's discoveries by visiting the place he calls Gomorrah, which fortunately is not far from its northern extremity.

On the morning of the 10th of March, as there was bright sunshine at last, a large party set out from Hauser's at half-past ten for Jericho. Dr Sim and Mr Graham were to find accommodation at night in my tent. The former accompanied me, and the latter rode down with Sheikh Mahmoud, Mustafa's brother, in the evening. There were besides, the Rev. Mr Sampson, and his brother, Colonel Sampson, H.E.I.C.S.; two Messrs Fletcher, cousins, one of whom was an officer in the Guards; and two Messrs Smith, brothers, from Norwich. An American party from the Latin Convent had started an hour before us, whom we overtook and passed half-way. We left by the St Stephen's Gate, and, crossing the shoulder of the Mount of Olives by the road with which the reader has become already familiar, soon arrived at El Aazarizah (Bethany). From thence, proceeding eastward, we left

Abou Dis on the right hand. To the left there was a ridge of low chalk hills, beyond which Dr Barclay had pointed out to me from the Mount of Olives a long narrow wadi, running towards the Nahr el Kelt, as the ancient Bahurim, along which David, when flying from Absalom, took his journey, pelted with stones and cursed by Shimei, who was on the opposite bank.—2 Sam. xvi. 13. About an hour after leaving Jerusalem, we descended by a very steep and rugged path into a deep valley called Wadi el Haoud, at the head of which, by the side of the path, is a fountain of running water, called by the Arabs Bir el Haoud, and by pilgrims ‘the Well of the Apostles,’ where it is said they used to rest on their journeys from Jericho, a tradition to which no objection can be offered. As the southern border of the tribe of Benjamin was drawn from Jericho to Jerusalem, it is more than probable that in this well we have another of the landmarks which distinguished it, and that this Bir el Haoud is the *EX SHEMESH* (‘the Well of Shemesh’) mentioned in Joshua xviii. 17. If this be correct, we have still in existence five of those landmarks which divided Benjamin from Judah, viz., Zelzah, Nephtoth, En Rogel, En Shemesh, and Jericho. The Stone of Bohan, which was the intermediate mark between the two latter, has not yet been recognised.

Wadi El Haoud is a long narrow valley, extending eastward for several miles, well cultivated, and possessing a tolerably smooth and level path, along which we rode at a great pace. To avoid quarrels, it has been arranged at the British Consulate that the Sheikh of Abou Dis and the Sheikhs of the Ghor Bedouins shall alternately conduct travellers to Jericho. My party had long been the property of Sheikh Mustafa and his brother; but, about the middle of Wadi el Haoud, a party of Bedouins were waiting for us, who were to be the guides of the other travellers. They were sitting on the ground, their horses picketed to their long spears, which were stuck in the ground. The moment they observed us approaching they vaulted into their saddles, shouldered their spears, and, amid shouts and screeches, put their horses to their full speed, seeming to find great delight in drawing them up suddenly when at full gallop, thus nearly throwing the poor animals upon their haunches. The shaft of their djerid is made of a bamboo cane, grown at Ain Jedy, and is from twelve to fifteen feet long, with a spear head at one end, and a pointed iron shod at the other for striking it into the ground. Some of our dragomen seized these instruments and began a mock fight, but they could not handle them with the ease and grace of the Arabs. Near the point where the road leaves this wadi we passed several nubk trees, on one of

which was hung an immense viper, which had been recently killed. The strata of the Jurassic limestone in the lower part of this wadi were remarkably curious; sometimes extending in undulating lines like a section of the waves of the sea, at other times pinched up till they had assumed the form of an arch, or hollowed out like the ribs of a ship laid down in the builders' yard. The wadi gradually turns away to the south-east. We observed a much greater variety and abundance of wild flowers along our path than we had seen in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, chief among which were the anemone, the pheasant's eye, and a blue everlasting, which I had never seen before. Ascending a round green hill we came to a khan, now in ruins, and opposite to it a large building in the same condition, which must have been a fortress in former days for the protection of the road. This khan has two names; it is sometimes called Khan el Hatrou and sometimes Khan el Akhman, and it lies half-way between Jerusalem and Er Riha. Shortly after leaving it we came up with our baggage and with the Americans, who had kept by it all the way. Just then our party appeared a formidable one, as, apart from our escort, we numbered twenty men and fifty horses and mules. The road to Jericho still retains the reputation for insecurity which it had in our Lord's day, and we all rode armed lest we should be surprised by robbers.

About a mile beyond the khan we ascended a steep hill to the left of the road, as one of the Sheikhs said we should have a most extensive view from it, nor were we disappointed. Down below us to the left was the deep Wadi el Kelt, through which the Nahr el Kelt (the brook Cherith) flows from its source in the intermittent springs of Wadi Fúor until it issues into the plain. Before us to the east we had the beautiful valley of the Jordan, abounding in groves of trees, and carpetted with the loveliest green, and, beyond the river, the picturesque mountains of Moab and Ammon. Nearly opposite to us, between the river and these mountains, lay an extensive triangular plain, which must have been the last encampment of the Israelites ere they entered the Promised Land; the place where Balaam, with cursing in his heart was compelled to bless them, and which witnessed the final parting of Moses from the host he had led for forty years. There is no place on either side of it along the base of the mountains where such a multitude could have encamped, and it strikes the eye at once as most beautifully adapted for such a purpose. Among the hills behind it the direction of Wadi Heshbán (the ancient Heshbon) was pointed out to us, and we could trace the path which leads to Gerash, about two days' journey beyond the Jordan. Several of

us would gladly have extended our excursion so as to embrace a visit to it; but the Arabs forming our escort refused to take us, saying we should undoubtedly be robbed. The miserable village of Er Riha (the modern Jericho) was barely visible in a grove of trees about the middle of the plain; while the course of the Jordan was marked for miles by a belt of trees on either side till it fell into the Dead Sea; not as I had supposed from the middle of the plain but from its remotest corner at the foot of the mountains of Moab. There was a fine view also of the Dead Sea, which greatly resembled one of our large Highland lochs on a calm hot summer day, reflecting on its surface the high mountains which rise from its very edge. After enjoying the scene we sat down for a few minutes to eat what we had brought in our saddle-bags for lunch; and, while so employed, two Arabs climbed up the hill towards us, leaving their company, who were travelling along the same road with ourselves. They belonged to that nest of robbers—Kerak—and were now returning to it from El Khuds; but, if they had formed any thievish designs against us, they found too large and too well-armed a company to make the attempt. They were perfectly civil, and only besought us, as all Arabs do, for backshish. I asked them to point out Kerak; but though they indicated the cliffs I have more than once referred to, no trace of the town could be seen.

As we continued our journey towards the plain we became very sensible of the change of climate which a three hours' ride had introduced us to, for in some of the gorges through which we passed the heat of the sun, reflected from the rocks, was most overpowering. The road runs through several narrow passes in which the chalk rocks ascend perpendicularly on both sides, where robbery could be effected, as indeed it often is, with the utmost ease; and, just before descending into the plain, it has been cut in the side of a hill overhanging a deep precipice, from which there is no friendly parapet to protect the traveller, so that a caper or false step on the part of his horse would plunge him into the Cherith several hundred feet below. De Sauley found somewhere in this latter part of the road a place which he calls Thour el Dabar, which, with a most amusing disregard of all Scriptural topography, he sets down, without hesitation, as the Debir of the south of Judah (Kirjath Sepher) which was taken by Othniel. Although we had the same Sheikh Mahmoud who conducted De Sauley, and had our eyes open to mark any ancient place we might pass, we could discover nothing but the remains, in one or two places, of the ancient pavement on the road, and of an aqueduct which, in



former days, had brought water down to 'the City of Palm Trees.' The mountains rise like a wall from the plain, and the descent was effected by a rough zigzag path. When near the bottom we came upon a ruined tower, evidently, from its reticulated structure, of the Herodian or Roman age, which had been built to command the pass. This may very possibly have been the citadel of Cypros, spoken of frequently by Josephus as being above Jericho, which Herod built and named after his mother. At this point we sent forward our dragomen, with the mules, to prepare the tents near the village of Er Riha, and turning to the north we crossed the Cherith. Swollen with the recent rains, it was here a stream of twenty feet in breadth, and the water, which flowed with great impetuosity, reached to our saddle-girths, so that we were obliged to sit with our legs across the horses necks to get over without a wetting. Immediately after crossing the Kelt we came upon ancient foundations and ruins, which extend with more or less regularity to Ain es Sultán, and which seem to stretch away back to the foot of the hills fully a quarter of a mile to the west. Before us lay mounds of considerable size, in the vicinity of the fountain; and although the greater part of the stones have been carried away and used in more modern buildings, there remains in these ruins, and in the broken pottery and rubbish of which the mounds are made up, sufficient proof that an ancient city existed here. Indeed, Josephus states very explicitly, that the old city was near this fountain;<sup>1</sup> and, to my mind, the accuracy of his statement is abundantly corroborated by its vicinity to the mountains; for the spies whom Rahab had advised to fly thither for safety could easily have reached them from the fountain in a quarter of an hour. These ruins probably belong to two different towns. The mounds mark the Jericho of the Canaanites, of Rahab and the spies, which fell before the blast of the ram's horns; and the ruins farther south the Jericho visited by our Lord, the dwelling-place of Zaccheus and Bartimeus, which was built by Hiel the Bethelite, despite the calamities that Joshua had predicted would fall on the family of the man who did so.

Between the ruins and the mounds we rode through a grove of nubk trees, the fruit of which was nearly ripe. As I have often mentioned the tree, it may be as well to state, that the fruit is in form like an olive, but a degree larger, and when ripe is of a yellowish brown colour. It has a slightly acid taste, which makes it very grateful

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. iv. cap. 8.

in that hot climate. At intervals we also passed by the side of the path, a plant having a yellow fruit in size like a lime, and exceedingly prickly leaves, which is supposed by many to be the Apple of Sodom. It is the *Solanum Sanctum* or night-shade of Linnæus, and the *Pomum Sodomiticum* of Hasselquist, his pupil. We brought away a number of the apples; but from the description Dr Robinson gives of the 'Osher which he met with at Ain Jedjy, it would seem to resemble more the plant, whose fruit Josephus describes. Half an hour after crossing the Nahr el Kelt, we came to the Ain Sultán, around which are the mounds marking the site of the earliest Jericho. With the exception of a circular wall around the fountain, there are no other ruins of any height distinguishable. The fountain bubbles up from underneath the ground at the foot of one of these mounds, and also from underneath the wall, filling a shallow basin with beautiful limpid water, which flows off in a copious stream to irrigate the fields and groves around. This is the only fountain in the neighbourhood of Jericho, and I believe there can be no doubt that it is the one whose waters were sweetened by the Prophet Elisha.—2 Kings ii. 21. The ancient city and the school of the prophets which it contained, have long since disappeared; but the benefit Elisha then conferred is still felt in the fertilising streams which it spreads over the plain. It is carried by an aqueduct over the river Kelt, and dispenses its waters to the south as well as to the north of that stream.

The ruins of the sugar mill—a building belonging to the times of the Saracens—are about a quarter of a mile to the west of the fountain. It was supplied with water by two aqueducts, one coming down from the high hill immediately in its rear; the other from another fountain called Ain Duk, in a wadi a little farther to the north, beside which Dr Robinson discovered the ruins of a castle called Docus (1 Macc. xvi. 14, 15), where Simon Maccabeus was slain by Ptolemy, his son-in-law. Four of our party rode up to the ruined sugar-mill, notwithstanding the urgent remonstrances of the Bedouins, who said that we should certainly be attacked by robbers; but we met with no adventure, and found the ruins not worth the risk we had run. The aqueduct I have mentioned as coming down from the hill above, suggested to us the idea, that probably more ancient ruins might be found in their immediate neighbourhood. Immediately behind the sugar-mill rises Ghebel Karantal to the height of 1400 or 1500 feet above the plain. Tradition points to it as the desert place where our Lord fasted forty days and nights, and was tempted of Satan.

On leaving the fountain of Elisha we rode through a thick grove

of trees, crossing on our path several rivulets coming from the fountain. Besides the fig and the nubk trees there were the castor-oil plant (*Palma Christi*), which had assumed all the dimensions of a tree; and the *zúkkúm*, a tree resembling in size and foliage our plum, but having thorns from one to two inches long on its branches, and bearing a fruit in appearance like a green plum, but which, instead of being pulpy inside, contains a large stone covered with the thinnest possible rind. The tree is probably the *myrobalanum*, for which Jericho was famed in former days, and from its nuts the balsam of Jericho is now produced. The inhabitants of the village, after bruising them, throw them into warm water, when the oil rises to the surface, is skimmed off, and carefully preserved. This balsam is highly prized, and it is the only substitute now for the celebrated balm of Gilead, the plants of which were once cultivated here and at En Gedi. This *zúkkúm* is supposed by some to be the tree from which the crown of thorns was plaited for the Saviour's head. The climate of Jerusalem is too cold for it to grow there; and as the insults to which the Saviour was exposed at the hands of the Roman soldiery could not have been premeditated and prepared for,—I think the branches of the thorny ballán, which grows in great abundance round Jerusalem, much more likely to have been used.

A ride of twenty minutes brought us to the village of Er Riha, in an open space to the west of which our tents were pitched. It was, without exception, the most miserable village I had seen in the country, consisting of a score of huts built with loose stones, and covered with bushes and mud. It is raised on a sort of mound, and a fence of withered branches is drawn in a circle round it. One poor stunted palm alone remains, in what was once 'the City of Palm Trees.' The journey from Jerusalem to the fountain of Elisha occupied four hours, including the stoppage we had made on the hill by the way. After resting awhile some of our party went out shooting, and other two joined me in a visit to the castle, with a view of surveying the surrounding country from it. It is a solitary square tower which, from its style of architecture, probably was built by the Crusaders. A low wall encloses a court-yard, round which there were booths made with branches for the accommodation of half a dozen of soldiers, who are the Governor's body-guard. The ground floor of the tower is used as a stable for horses, and is perfectly dark. Groping our way up a stair in the corner we got upon the roof, where the Governor was squatted on his carpet with one or two of the Sheikhs of the neighbouring tribes. A small chamber, built on the roof in one

of the angles, was his haréem. He kindly gave us permission to walk round and survey the country. Towards the south the view was not extensive, as the intervening ground shut out the Dead Sea, which is about ten miles distant. The mountains of Moab and the Amorites, however, appeared in great beauty. Among them were two which appeared higher than the rest, the names of which were Ghebel Gergah, and Ghebel Belka. Ghebel Atarous, which is supposed to be Mount Nebo was also pointed out to the south-east, and from any one of these Moses could have obtained an extensive view of the Promised Land. To the north, probably ten or fifteen miles away, a high mountain called Ghebel Sartába, seems almost to close in the plain, and at the foot of it are ruins called Kharbet Samrah, which not improbably, as suggested by De Sauley, mark the site of ZEMARAIM, one of the cities mentioned in Joshua's list as belonging to the tribe of Benjamin; though, with extraordinary carelessness, he places it on the roadside between Jerusalem and Jericho, some fifteen miles south-west of its real position. I quite agree with him, however, in his identification of Sartába as the Zaretan (Joshua iii. 16), Zarthan (1 Kings vii. 46), and Zartanah (1 Kings iv. 12) of Scripture, where one of Solomon's purveyors dwelt, where the vessels for the Temple were cast in the clay ground, and where the waters of Jordan were cut off for the passage of the Israelites. This I consider a really valuable discovery, as it proves that the Jordan was dried up for the space of twenty miles, so that the thousands of Israel could pass over it in a very short space of time. The most prominent object to the west was Ghebel Karantal (Mons Quarautana), the sides of which are full of caves, some sepulchral, no doubt, in their origin, others made by the ascetics, who used to pass their lives on the mountain, in the earlier centuries of our faith; while, on the top, there is still a convent to which some of the Greek monks from Jerusalem repair during the season of Lent.

We returned to our tents as darkness came on, but it did not last long, as a bright full moon rose soon afterwards. Dr Sim and I waited for Graham till the cravings of hunger fairly banished both patience and ceremony, and as he had not made his appearance by seven o'clock we concluded that something must have detained him at Jerusalem, though now and then uncomfortable misgivings haunted us lest he should have fallen among thieves by the way, as Mahmoud was also missing. Just as we were finishing dinner, however, they arrived. Business had detained our friend longer than he expected, and they had ridden in three hours from Jerusalem. At one point of

the road the Sheikh had got into a state of agitation, as he saw two Bedouins watching them from a neighbouring hill and anticipated an attack, but a sight of Graham's revolver reassured him. While enjoying the comforts of a chibouk after the day's toils, we were startled by the sound of a chorus of female voices approaching the tents from the village. They visited two or three of the other tents before they came to mine, but at length twenty or thirty women, headed by an old hag smoking a chibouk, formed in a circle round the door and performed a dance. Their only garment was the blue chemise, which being open to the waist displayed much more of their persons than was decent; their faces too were uncovered, which struck us as an extraordinary infringement of Bedouin etiquette, especially when they came among Franks, and altogether there was a want of modesty in their appearance which did not augur highly for their morality. There was nothing immodest, however, in the dance itself, on the contrary it was very graceful. Two women danced at a time, while the rest sang to them. Having taken the scarfs off their heads and twisted them into wreaths, the dancers held them in their hands, one end close to the body, the other extended at the full length of the arm. They moved their feet a little, but the dance consisted chiefly in extending the scarf alternately on the right and left of the body, setting to each other, and twisting about their bodies as the Bedouins of the Desert had done. After having performed for five or six minutes, during which several couples took the dancing part, they set up loud shouts for backshish, on obtaining which they left us to repeat the performance before another tent. The whole of our party soon after assembled in the Messrs Sampson's tent, where there was a universal expression of surprise that Mohammedans, who are generally so jealous of their women being unveiled, should have allowed them to make such an exhibition before strangers; but on my return to Jerusalem I learned that both the men and women of Jericho are notoriously lewd and abandoned, and that the sin of Sodom is still perpetrated by both sexes in this miserable village. Strange that sin of a particular kind should thus perpetuate itself from age to age in the same locality.

Word was passed from tent to tent, before bedtime, that we were to start next morning for the Jordan at seven o'clock. About midnight our Arab escort, with a view to frightening us, and thus getting a larger backshish at parting, mounted their horses and rode out with much noise and bluster at full gallop, declaring that robbers who had stolen a horse from them a week before were now approaching to

attack us, and that they were going to fight them. The bait, however, did not take. There were so many of us, all well armed, that it would have been a large body of Bedouins indeed who would have ventured an attack. Of this we were all aware, and as no excitement was produced by the announcement, our crafty defenders shrunk back unobserved into the camp, and we heard no more either of the robbers or of the stolen horse. The jackals closed in around our tents, and made such a fearful noise that sleep was out of the question. Their howl is something between the bark of a dog and the cry of a child, and particularly resembles the yelling of an animal caught in a trap. Dr Sim rose at length in despair, took his gun, and went out to do slaughter among them 'by moonlight alone,' and from the wild screeches which answered the report of his gun as he let fly among them, I fancy that some of them were hit.

Next morning as neither of my companions was ready in time, and as the tent and breakfast apparatus could not be packed till we had had our morning meal, the rest of the party started without us. Dr Sim had been out shooting since five in the morning, and being a keen sportsman had taken no note of time. We got off, however, by half-past seven, and ten minutes later we had left behind all the trees and grass and beautiful wild flowers we had seen the previous day, and the ground over which we rode, though the soil is excellent, had become absolutely barren through want of water. There is water enough in Elisha's fountain to irrigate it for many miles, if the lazy effeminate villagers would only exert themselves; but the very corn they live on is grown by the fellahin who come down from the hills above the plain and return after the harvest is over. For a short time our course lay along the left bank of the Kelt, but we soon crossed it, and held our way more to the south, while it pursues its course a little farther to the north as we were told, and falls into the Jordan above the place where the pilgrims visit it. I remarked as I rode along over the dry parched country between Jericho and the Jordan, many of the same bushes which grow in the wadis of the great Desert, thus clearly proving the difference of temperature between this valley and the mountain region in which Jerusalem stands. Lieut. Lynch of the American navy, ascertained by levelling, that the high ground immediately to the west of that city was 4000 feet above the level of the Jordan and the Dead Sea; and that the depression of the surface of the latter below that of the Mediterranean was a little more than 1300 feet. The climate, therefore, must be very nearly a tropical one; and Colonel Sampson afterwards

pointed out to us several plants with which he was familiar in India.

We saw about a mile to the north of us, ruins which Mahmoud called Kefr Hedjlah, near which there is the fountain of Ain Hedjlah, marking the situation and bearing nearly unchanged the name of a town of Benjamin, BETH HOGLAH, which was also another landmark on its southern boundary. An hour's hard ride brought us to the bank of the Jordan, which our companions had reached only a few minutes before us. For about a couple of hundred yards before coming to it we had to make our way through a thick jungle, in which riding was rather inconvenient, but the bank itself we found clear of undergrowth, and lined with rows of willow, poplar, acacia, and tarfa trees, extending down to the river's edge. We came upon it where it makes a sudden bend to the west for a few hundred yards, and then resumes its southern course; and as the stream above the bend was not visible, it looked like an aqueous volcano discharging a full-grown river out of a crater surrounded with luxuriant verdure. It is about a quarter of a mile below the ford where the pilgrims bathe. Some of the younger members of our company bathed in the river, which was much swollen with the rains, and could not have been less than 200 feet in breadth.

I had a strong inclination to follow their example, but as I had resolved to bathe in the Dead Sea, was restrained by the fear that two baths within a couple of hours might prove injurious. It was curious to watch the different ways in which the party occupied themselves during this visit. Some of those who were too prudent to bathe, yet wished to stand in the waters of the Jordan, put themselves to great trouble in tugging off some of the nether portions of their outfit to gratify the whim. Others passed the time in cutting walking sticks from the trees, and filling tin bottles with the water, as presents for distant friends. Mr Graham had brought his photographic instrument, and was busy taking a view of the river, with a group of Bedouins on the bank. Unfortunately, as we afterwards ascertained, the impression was not a good one, and want of time prevented him from making a duplicate. On looking round, we found we had a rival in a French artist who had joined our company, no one knew when or where, as till that moment he had not been observed. He told us that having learned in Jerusalem that a large party had set out for the Jordan, he had resolved to travel under our protection. He had neither guide nor mukhari, and he carried his photographic machine and his rug on the horse he rode. The colour of the Jordan is yellow, like

that of the Arno and Tiber; its waters are sweet, but not so pleasant to the taste as those of the Nile. Even were there no trees to interrupt the view it would be impossible to catch a glimpse of the river till close upon it, as it here flows between soft muddy banks, twenty feet high. In the waters of this river the Lord Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist; and on its banks His divine mission was confirmed by the visible descent of the Holy Ghost, and by the attestation from the excellent Glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.'

Our visit to the Jordan lasted about an hour; after which we got to horse once more, and set out due south for the head of the Dead Sea. About a mile farther on, we again came to the edge of the river, where it makes another slight bend to the west; but the bank was so precipitous and high that we dared not venture very near. Trees however were growing on the steep sides and bathing their branches in the stream. The luxuriance of these trees in their new coats of verdure was most refreshing; and their position and appearance called most vividly to mind the Psalmist's description of the righteous man—'Like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither.—Psalm i. 3. The heat as we rode along the Ghor was so oppressive that we moved very leisurely, occupying two hours in getting over ten miles. There was not a shrub or green thing to be met with for miles. The ground over which we rode was a bluish clay, which after rain I could well fancy must be utterly impassable; but its state at that time indicated beyond a doubt, that while Jerusalem had been deluged with rain scarce a drop could have fallen in the plain. It was full of fissures caused by excessive drought; and as the horses hoofs fell upon it, it rang with a sharp metallic sound. This region is called the Ghor, a tract of perfect barrenness; and yet I have not a doubt that if by means of the *Sâkiah* (water-wheel) of Egypt, the waters of the Jordan were turned upon it, it would, though literally now 'as iron beneath the feet,' become as fertile as the district around Jericho, or as the strip along the banks of the river. The scenery was very grand; the high hills of Moab were before us on one side, and those of Judah's wilderness, or the Hills of Canaan, on the other; while in the deep ravine between them 'the Salt Sea' stretched away as far as the eye could reach.

That portion of the Vale of Siddim which yet remains unengulphed presented certainly a scene of desolation and solemn stillness, for neither the black tents of the Bedouins, with their semi-barbarous



occupants, nor their flocks were anywhere to be seen; but there was nothing of that sullen, gloomy, judgment-like appearance with which the imagination of many travellers invests it. The waters were sparkling in tiny wavelets under the rays of the noontide sun, and a pleasant breeze passing over it from the south, gave a little relief from the fierce heat. I can understand such gloomy pictures however presenting themselves to the imagination of the traveller, sweltering under the heat of a July sun, when there is not a breath to stir the waters, and all the functions of nature appear paralyzed. A bold headland on the western shore, about ten miles from the head of the sea, bears the name of Ras el Teshkhah, beside which there is a fountain of warm brackish water, called Ain Teshkhah. Beyond that, about midway down the western shore, Mahmoud pointed out the direction of Ain Jedy, and quite at the extremity of the sea, a round dark blue hill, which was Ghebel Usdum (Mountain of Sodom), full seventy miles distant. This was the only view I had of places which, in setting out on my travels, I had resolved at all hazards to visit; and the disappointment was all the more bitter on finding that if I had braved a good wetting on the journey to Jericho, I should not only have accomplished my purpose, but escaped the rain and cold and snow at Jerusalem. On arriving at the shore of the sea we turned to the west, and rode along it for nearly half a mile till we were opposite a little island about 100 yards from the shore, on which there are the ruins of a building, and a quay facing the south. De Sauley characterizes these as 'undoubtedly belonging to a highly remote period, probably contemporaneous with the catastrophe which destroyed the Pentapolis.' It was the unanimous opinion of all our party, that the small square stones could not belong to an earlier age than Herod's, possibly to a much a later one, and that they had been used in the construction of a small castle by Herod or the Romans, at the time of the reduction of Masada.

We had to ride out to the island along a shallow bank of sand covered with two and a half feet of water, which is probably dry in summer, and found some of our party, who had preceded us, already preparing for a bath in the Dead Sea. A most extraordinary and ludicrous sight it must have been to the Americans, who did not share our aquatic propensities, to see ten men all wearing the fez, or wide-awake hats, for a defence against the sun, bobbing about like corks on the surface of the water, and vainly endeavouring to keep their bodies sufficiently immersed to enable them to swim. The French *artiste* was first in the water, when he spun about like a tub, both the upper

part of his body and legs being above the surface, and greatly amused us by his continual protestations, '*Ma foi, Messieurs, on ne peut pas nager ici!*' All that we had heard of the buoyancy of the water was fully confirmed in our own experience. Nothing could be more easy than floating on the back; but when trying to swim, I found my legs getting above the surface in spite of all my endeavours, at every stroke, like an oar fastened to the rollock of a boat when it has been depressed in the water. While we were satisfying ourselves of the greater specific gravity of these waters than of the human body, an amusing incident occurred. One of our party who could not swim, having delayed making acquaintance with the Dead Sea till he had had both oral and ocular testimony to its buoyancy, at last resolved with great confidence to launch out on his back and float upon its far-famed waters. His first essay was so successful that probably the idea struck him there could not be a more suitable *école de natation* for a beginner, so he turned on his breast for the purpose of striking out, but having deranged his equilibrium in the act, down went his head and up went his heels; and had it not been for the exertions of one or two of the party who were within reach, the consequences might have been serious, as he could not extricate himself. In his own estimation they were quite serious enough as it was, for he had imbibed per force such a quantity of the acrid nauseous water, that it produced a severe fit of vomiting. I tasted the water more moderately than he did, and know nothing to compare with it. I was quite prepared to find it as salt as brine, but that was the least disagreeable part; there was an acidity in it which reminded one of a dilution of vitriol mixed with salt, burning the tongue and roof of the mouth, so that it was hours before I got rid of the taste and uneasy sensation it had produced, though I had not held it in my mouth more than a second. It is as disagreeable to the touch as to the taste, and after all our rubbing left a greasy unctuous moisture upon the skin, which would not dry up. Our trousers, which had got well splashed while riding through the water to the island, were next day stiff with salt, and we were obliged to have them washed in fresh water at Jerusalem before they were fit for further use.

As Colonel Sampson had a thermometer in his possession, we were able to make some experiments on the difference of temperature between the air and water at different places. At the Ain es Sultán, or Fountain of Elias, at three P.M., we found the temperature of the air  $80^{\circ}$ , and of the water  $70^{\circ}$  Fahr. On the banks of the Jordan, at half-past eight A.M., we found the thermometer stood in the air at

83° Fahr., and in the water of the river at 60°. The temperature of the air on the north shore of the Dead Sea, at eleven o'clock A.M., was 78°, and that of the water 73°; thus giving a difference between the temperature of the air and the waters of the Jordan of 23°, and of 5° only between the air and the temperature of the Dead Sea. It also proved a difference of temperature of 13° between the waters of the Jordan and of the Dead Sea. I brought away a bottle of the Dead Sea water, and succeeded in getting it safe home. The result of its analysis by Professor Gregory is subjoined.<sup>1</sup>

After an hour's rest on the island we again mounted, and rode westward along the head of a creek, which forms the north-west extremity of the sea;—the same which is mentioned in Joshua as 'the bay of the sea at the uttermost part of Jordan' (Joshua xv. 5), from whence the northern quarter of the tribe of Judah was reckoned. The beach was shingly and very steep. I should imagine from the quantity of gravel and drift wood washed up upon it that the prevailing wind was from the south and south-west. The wood consisted of roots, trunks, and branches of trees, which have been brought down in time of flood by the Jordan. It was as black as if it had been charred, but this is the result of the acrid water, and of the scorching rays of the sun; as our Sheikh told us their attempts to ignite it were all futile. We searched in vain for pieces of bitumen, as it is only towards the lower end of the lake that these are met with. I got some fine specimens of it afterwards at Jerusalem. It exudes from under one of the mountains near Ghebel Usdum, and is brought on camels to El Khúds for sale by the Bedouins. My informant, Mr Bergheim, told me that after an earthquake it flows out in very large quantities. In searching for it along the shore we picked up three or four perch, quite dead, which had forfeited their lives by their temerity in exchanging the waters of Tiberias for those of the Bahr Lút. I believe there is no doubt of the fact that fish cannot live in its waters; but we had

<sup>1</sup> Specific gravity at 60° Fahr., 1210; amount of solid matter, 248·6 grains per 1000, or 17,402 per gallon, consisting of—

Chloride of Magnesium . . . . .	56·12
Chloride of Sodium . . . . .	29·62
Chloride of Calcium . . . . .	11·25
Chloride of Potassium . . . . .	2·30
Sulphate of Lime . . . . .	·43
Bromides of Magnesium and of Potassium . . . . .	·28

proof positive of the falsehood of the tale so long believed, that its exhalations were so poisonous that no bird could fly across it, as we saw three or four crows pass over our heads, and direct their flight across it to the Ras el Feshkhah. Our road lay through a thicket of dwarf trees and reeds, which grow on the banks of one or two streams of warm brackish water, and the Nakb Kaneitarah lay before us only a mile or two distant, by which the road usually taken to Mar Saba ascends the hills of Judah.

On the previous evening, when we were all assembled together in Colonel Sampson's tent, I mentioned my intention of visiting the place which De Sauley has pronounced to be Gomorrah, as it lay not far from the head of the sea between the western shore and the mountains. All my companions had then expressed their determination to accompany me; but, unfortunately for freedom of action, they had all made agreements with their dragomen on the *contract* principle, which has been described in a former chapter, and consequently had masters to consult. I suppose some of them had mentioned their desire in the morning before starting, for Messieurs les Dragomen were laying their heads together, and in frequent consultation with the Sheikhs by the way, and it was evident a storm was brewing. When I gave directions to Mahmoud to lead the way to Goumrán it burst out. First one dragoman, then another, rode up to him to hear what orders had been given, and then rode up to his own master to dissuade and threaten, as might be necessary. They predicted all manner of dreadful results, in which the two Sheikhs joined them, assuring us it would take two days to go there, and that we would have to sleep on the ground and go without food, as our tents and baggage had gone on to Mar Saba. Mahmoud and his brother Mustafa, the Sheikh of Abu Dis, had assured me, in Mr Finn's office, that we could visit it on the way from Jericho to Mar Saba with perfect ease, as it was not far out of the way; so, being convinced that all this was a lying trick, I held firm to my determination. My own dragoman, having nothing to gain or lose by it, behaved well, and took my side; the others came up in turn to endeavour to make me change my mind, but in vain; they succeeded with their own masters, however, who one after another abandoned the enterprise. After they had passed on, when Graham alone was with me, I made Shaheen tell Mahmoud that to Goumrán we were determined to go, that he had signed a contract at the British Consulate to take us there, and that it would be better for his own interest to do so without more ado. Knowing, however, the sovereign power of a backshish with these fellows, I

added that I was now going to speak my last word, and he should have to choose the alternative on the spot. If he turned his horse's head at once to Goumrán I would add twenty piastres to his backshish; if he refused I would report him next day to Mr Finn as having broken his contract, and would not pay a *para* of the stipulated sum. In another minute we were on our way to verify De Sauley's discovery. Dr Sim, who had ridden forward with some of the other gentlemen under the impression that the project had failed, galloped after us the moment he perceived we had gained our point; and, I fear, we three Scotchmen crowed rather loudly over our own pluck, as we left our English and Irish friends in inglorious thralldom to their rascally masters.

From the stream of warm water, where this dispute was settled, it took us exactly *one hour* to reach Goumrán; and we did not fail on arriving to let Mahmoud know what we thought of his powers of lying. It cannot be more than six miles at the utmost from the island where we bathed. The ground over which we rode was a series of ridges and hollows like waves of the sea. The soil was dry and soft, so that the horses' hoofs sunk deep in it, but indurated on the surface by an incrustation of salt, either coming out of the earth itself or occasioned by the drift of the spray from the sea. As we approached the place we had to descend two very deep ravines and scramble up the opposite sides, which were soft, yielding, and very precipitous. It was with difficulty we tugged our poor animals up, and it was a matter of the utmost wonder how Mahmoud and his follower contrived to retain their seats. The second ascent was longer and still more difficult; but, having accomplished it, a small heap of ruins lay before us, about a quarter of a mile below the precipitous wall formed by the hills of Judah's wilderness. These ruins stand upon an elevated plateau, composed of chalky clay, the sides of which have been swept away to a great depth by the winter torrents descending from the hills, so that they present the appearance of jagged irregular precipices. The plateau is 500 feet, at least, above the level of the Wadi Goumrán, which runs immediately to the south of it; and, as far as one could judge by the eye, 800 feet above the level of the sea, which is a couple of miles distant as the crow flies. My companions thought these figures considerably within the mark, but I state them according to the impression made on my own mind. And this is what the member of the French Institute would have us to accept as a City of the *Plain*. The ruins were so insignificant that we accused Mahmoud with deceiving us, by having led us in a wrong direction.

To prove that this was not the case, he led us to a stone, about the middle of the ruins, and sitting down upon it, said, 'On this stone Howajee De Sauley sat, and on that, pointing to another near it, sat Howajee Edoardo!' The principal ruin is that of a small fortress, containing several chambers, which had been built to guard the pass above; and around it, on the east and south, a few cottages have stood, which probably afforded shelter to the soldiers, the whole having been surrounded by a wall for defence. They have been built with small square stones of the same size and general appearance as those on the island, but they are now much destroyed by the action of the sun and the *salmastro* from the sea. The only thing which remains entire, though of the same age with the ruins, is a Birket about thirty feet in length, the interior of which is still covered with cement, like those about Jerusalem. De Sauley judiciously leaves out all mention of this. Does he attribute it also to the age of the Pentapolis? A double row of stones, two feet apart, runs from the hill behind to the cistern, and has served as a rude aqueduct to convey water. This ruined fortress may be ascribed to the time of Herod, who resided at Jericho, and built many in this neighbourhood; or it may have been erected by the Romans while they were laying siege to the fortress of Masada farther down; but, according to M. De Sauley's own showing, Strabo mentions two fortresses which guarded the passes in these hills, called Threx and Taurus, which were destroyed by Pompey, and it is very probable that the ruins belong to one of these. We questioned Mahmoud if there were other ruins below, on the road to Feshkhah, but he assured us there were none. Mr Finn had already informed me that he had examined carefully all the neighbourhood of Usdum years before De Sauley was there, and was convinced that there was not a vestige of a ruin to be found, the accuracy of which report Mr Van De Velde has since confirmed. In this instance there is at least a ruin, but, in transforming it into a town, M. De Sauley must have used a magnifying glass worthy a place beside our nursery friend the Giants' Ten Leagued Boots! This place is so near the head of the Dead Sea that all travellers who retain a *penchant* for his theory about the Pentapolis ought to go and satisfy themselves.

From these ruins of Goumrán we saw at the distance probably of a couple of miles farther south, a thicket of reeds which grow round the warm springs of Ain Feshkhah. Beyond it was the Ras el Feshkhah, a hill rising out of the water, which bars all progress along the shore to the south. Persons travelling from the head of the sea towards Ain Jedy, are compelled to make a *detour* in the direction

of Mar Saba, and descend again to the shore on the other side of this mountain. The resemblance between the name Feshkhah and the Hebrew orthography of Mount Pisgah (פִּסְגָּה, Fesgeh), is remarkable enough; but on the strength of it De Sauley endeavours to establish a theory as wild as the one he has propounded regarding the Cities of the Plain, and his English translator, taking him to task for any hesitation he displays in running directly in the teeth of the Scripture narrative, actually crams it down our throats as though doubt were impossible. It is, that this hill Ras el Feshkhah is the Mount Pisgah which Moses ascended to obtain a view of the Promised Land. A careful study of the passages of Scripture in which Pisgah is mentioned, must lead to the conclusion that Mount Nebo and Mount Pisgah are geographically closely united to one another, the latter being probably one of the peaks of the former, and that both were in the land of Moab.—Deut. xxxiv. 1, compared with Deut. iii. 17, 27, and iv. 49. M. De Sauley and his translator, however, are of a contrary opinion, and hold that while Nebo was on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, Pisgah was opposite to it on the western shore! In order to establish this theory, they confound passages of Scripture in which the plain of Jordan is mentioned with others which speak evidently of the plain of Moab to the east of the ridge of mountains on the border of the Dead Sea, and they twist and turn the sacred text in a most unscrupulous manner to compel its support. It might have been supposed that the intimations given in Scripture that Pisgah was in the land of Moab (Numbers xxiii. 14), and that Moses was not to cross the Jordan (Deut. iii. 27, xxxii. 52, xxxiv. 4), would have been sufficient to convince them that such a theory could not be maintained; but M. De Warren, the translator, gets over these by making the country of Moab extend across the Dead Sea so as to include Ras el Feshkhah, and by constituting the Jordan *an imaginary line*, after the manner of Mr Williams' *parish* of Bethany. 'In my humble opinion,' he says, 'the limit of the land of Moab was at the extremity of the plain, extending on the western shore of the Jordan as far as the foot of Mount Pisgah (viz. Ras el Feshkhah) to the south-west, and all along the offshoots of the same mountain to the westward.' Thus, all the lower part of the plain of Jordan is made to belong to the land of Moab; and as the border of Reuben marched with that of Moab, he makes Reuben also possess the land to the *west* of Jordan, between Beth Hogleh and the Dead Sea. This outrageous specimen of geographical ignorance is only equalled by the flippant manner in which he deals with Scripture, when it presents any obstacle

to the theory of which he has constituted himself the sponsor. As a specimen, take the following:—‘Again, Deut. iii. 27 becomes perfectly intelligible: “Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward: for thou shalt not go over this Jordan.” This Jordan has evidently here the metaphorical meaning of *this limit*, because the real limit, Mount Pisgah and the Ashdoth, IS TO BE FOR HIM A JORDAN, WHICH HE IS NOT ALLOWED TO CROSS.’<sup>1</sup> In other words, Moses actually crossed the *bonâ fide* Jordan, and actually stood on the land which was to be given to Israel, though God declared he should do neither; but he never crossed an imaginary line at the foot of the hills to the westward of the plain of Jericho, which M. De Warren, on the faith of his friend’s ‘geographical documents,’ has constituted an imaginary Jordan. It is but justice to M. De Sauley to say, that with reference to this strange theory, he exhibits much more modesty than his translator.

Nearly opposite us while at Goumrán, but a little farther south, we distinctly saw with the naked eye the little bay or opening among the hills of Moab called Wadi Zerka, where the stream from the hot springs of Callirohoe falls into the lake. Lieutenant Lynch visited it, and describes it thus:—‘Stopped in a cove formed by the Zerka main, the outlet of the hot springs of Callirohoe. The stream, twelve feet wide and ten inches deep, rushes in a southerly direction with great velocity into the sea. Temperature of the air 77°, of the sea 78°, of the stream 94°, and one mile up the chasm 95°.’<sup>2</sup> Farther down we saw, with the aid of the telescope, the high rocky banks of the Wadi Mojeb, through which the river Arnon empties itself into the Dead Sea; and between them rises up the lofty Ghebel Atarous, which is believed to be the Nebo or Pisgah of Scripture. I am inclined to believe it is so, not only from its being the highest mountain on the border of Moab, but likewise from its having at its base the hot springs of Callirohoe, which seem exactly to correspond with the Ashdoth Pisgah, which are frequently mentioned in Scripture as existing in that neighbourhood. The Hebrew word Ashdoth (אֲשְׁדוֹת) signifies springs or streams, and has been so rendered in Deut. iv. 49, ‘Even unto the sea of the plain, under the springs of Pisgah;’ and in other places where the Hebrew word Ashdoth is retained in the text, the meaning ‘springs of Pisgah’ is supplied in the margin. As one of the most remarkable features in the district, these hot springs

<sup>1</sup> The capitals are mine, the italics M. De Warren’s. See De Sauley’s Journey, vol. ii., pp. 84-87.

<sup>2</sup> Lynch’s Expedition to Dead Sea, p. 370.



would be most naturally fixed on as a land-mark of Israel's possessions to the east of Jordan, as the springs of Pisgah are in the passage just quoted. From Ghebel Atarous Moses could have seen the land of Israel, as it is described in the last chapter of Deuteronomy, but from Ras el Feshkhah, neither could he in ancient days, nor M. de Sauley in our time, have seen anything beyond a portion of the plain of Jordan, the Dead Sea, and the barren hills of the wilderness of En Gedi.

There is another point to which reference must be made before we take leave of the Dead Sea. Believing that the lake existed in its present state from the creation, or at least from the deluge, M. de Sauley maintains that still there was room enough on its shores for the conflict which took place between Chederlaomer, with his confederates, and the kings of the cities of the plain, when Lot was made a prisoner. With the exception of the tongue of land on which I believe with Dr Robinson that Zoar stood, there is no room for such a gathering on the eastern side; and from what we could observe with the telescope of its western shores, as well as from the account given of them by Robinson and Lynch, I am convinced that, had the lake then exhibited its present dimensions, space would have been equally wanting on them for such a battle. The Scriptures tell us that there was a well-watered plain there in the days of Lot, resembling the land of Egypt for fertility, in which there were bituminous pits; but there is no plain now, nor anything which man's imagination can twist into one. There are bays or indentations in the hills between projecting headlands, each of which, if one is inclined to speak magniloquently, may be dubbed a plain; but there is nothing in the least resembling a flat expanse of country, such as the districts called the Ghor, which occur at the northern and southern extremities of the sea. From all this I was led to the conclusion, either that the lake owes its origin to that fearful catastrophe whereby the cities of the plain were destroyed, or, if a small fresh water lake previously existed there, that the quality of its waters was changed, and its dimensions were enlarged, so as to overspread the whole fruitful plain, by the judgment which God executed against its wicked inhabitants. Moreover, I am not ashamed to avow my firm belief, notwithstanding all that the honourable member of the French Institute has written to the contrary, that Sodom and Gomorrah, and the other cities of the plain, are buried under the waters of that salt lake. No language can more clearly indicate a complete revolution over the face of the whole valley—upwards of seventy miles in extent—than these words, *'The Lord overthrew all the plain.'*

At one P.M. we left Goumrán, supposing that we should have to retrace our steps to the place where we had parted from our companions before we could get into the road for Mar Saba; we were therefore most pleasantly surprised, when Mahmoud, pointing to the perpendicular crags behind, assured us there was a path in that direction by which we were to ascend. The most attentive study of the precipitous face of rock failed to indicate any sign of a path; but Mahmoud was right. When we began to ascend, we found that there were ledges formed by the limestone strata in what at a distance appeared a smooth wall, along which there was not only a path, but a well-frequented one too, though fearfully steep, and in some places so narrow that our horses could scarcely get past. The existence of a well-frequented pass immediately behind the ruins we had visited, confirmed our previous impression that they belonged to a fortress which had been built to guard it. Riding was out of the question, as our poor animals had enough to do to drag up their own weight;—the heat of India could not be greater than what we endured, with the sun's rays beating directly on our heads, and radiating heat from the rocks around; and to make our situation still more unpleasant, my careless dragoman had sent on the *zimzimich* with the rest of the baggage, and we had to endure an agony of thirst. I now understand how precious a boon in some circumstances 'a cup of cold water' is, and how much of self-denial a poor follower of Christ might exercise in giving it to another in the name of a disciple. Once and again we feared lest the heat and thirst together should overpower us and compel us to retrace our steps, especially as our good Medico, who knew the climate, declared that such excitement would infallibly bring on fever and ague. From a natural cavern in the hills, however, we got a little water to moisten our throats, and at length reached the top of the pass of Goumrán at two o'clock. From thence the scenery resembles very much that of Tweedside or the Cumberland Moors,—hills on hills with intervening valleys, all covered with thin short grass interspersed with weeds and thistles, below which a bright green crop was beginning to spring up after the rain. Its verdure, however, is of short duration; by the end of May it is all burnt up, and the summer evening breeze sighs gently over its yellow withered stalks. Our Lord's description of it was, I suspect, not only figuratively, but literally true—'The grass of the field which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven.'—Matth. vi. 30. I think it extremely probable, that in the dearth of fire-wood, it was the custom in our Lord's day to feed the oven in which the bread was baked with the long coarse

stalks of grass, thistles, and other herbs, which remained parched and useless on the fields after the scorching heat of summer had eaten the moisture out of the ground.

Our course was directly south-west towards the convent of Mar Saba; and as the day wore on we got among the higher hills of the wilderness of Judah, surmounting the 3000 feet between the level of the Dead Sea and Mar Saba. From thence we had a beautiful view of the opening of the ravine through which the river Arnon flows; the precipitous rocks on either side appearing like huge black walls jutting out into the sea. Lynch describes the river at this point as 82 feet wide and 4 deep, flowing through a chasm 97 feet wide, formed by high perpendicular cliffs of red, yellow, and variegated sandstone. There were few incidents in our four hours' ride from the top of the pass to the wadi in which our tents were pitched, about a quarter of a mile from the convent. Dr Sim had a shot at a brace of red-legged partridges, and hit one in the wing, but it ran so fast after falling that we were unable to find it. We passed only one ruined site by the way, at one hour and a half from the top of the pass, which was called by Mahmoud Gonstaníyah or Gonslaníyah. There were some ancient foundations and a cistern for water among the scattered stones, but nothing more. Around the ruins there were large patches of *saponaria* growing, some of which we carried to our tents and experimented upon in the evening, when it produced a lather that would have gladdened the heart of any barber or washerwoman. An hour later we had on our left, about a mile away, the ruins of an old fortress or castle called Merdeh, which once guarded the pass through which the path leads down from Jerusalem and Mar Saba to Ain Jedy. At a pit by the road side, the water of which we were glad to drink, though covered with a thick coating of green slime, our horses began a furious fight among themselves, during the course of which I got a severe kick, and my companions made the narrowest possible escape from being dashed into the pit. As the water was about nine feet below the surface, we were obliged to extemporise a rope by fastening our handkerchiefs together, with a bottle attached, in order to reach the uninviting, though much coveted beverage. In a wadi, which we crossed at five o'clock, we came upon the encampment of the Taamerah Arabs, consisting of thirty or forty tents. The Sheikh Hamdán was not at home, but one or two of the tribe came out to bid us *marhíbbah* as we passed close by the tents. The flocks of sheep and goats which had been out in search of pasture were being driven back to the fold at the time. The Syrian sheep is higher than

those belonging to any of the breeds in England. It has long spindle legs; a face, the most prominent feature of which is a long Roman nose, that gives it a decidedly knowing look; and all the nourishment it gets seems to go to the tail. This important pendicle hangs down almost to the ground; it varies from six to twelve inches in breadth at the bottom, is composed entirely of fat, and always put me irresistibly in mind of the bag-wigs which gentlemen commoners wear attached to the back of their coats when they parade themselves at her Majesty's levees.

The objects of zoological interest in Palestine were so surprisingly few, probably owing to the earliness and severity of the season, that I may as well notice here the hornet mentioned in Scripture as one of the instruments which Jehovah made use of in driving out the Canaanites before the children of Israel.—Deut. vii. 20; Josh. xxiv. 12. It is of the same appearance and colour with the ordinary wasp, but rather more than double its size. The black line which connects the head and throat with the abdomen is about one-eighth of an inch in length, and not thicker than a horse hair. Stings from such animals must have been formidable wounds (an old Jewish tradition tells that five of them inevitably produced death); and a region haunted by hosts of such winged lancers must speedily have been abandoned by its inhabitants. The hornet, making allowance for difference of size, is as neat and expert in building as the beaver, and for his skill, is often dignified by entomologists with the name of the 'Mason' Wasp. On some of the roof-beams of Hauser's Hotel, as well as in the collection of curiosities which Dr Sim had made, I had opportunities of examining their nests. They are made of clay stuck on to a tile or beam of wood, and present the appearance of a series of bottles laid on their sides. They are spherical in form, from two to three inches in length, about an inch in circumference at the bottom, and tastefully rounded off at the top, with a narrow opening about the eighth of an inch in diameter. There are generally four or five of these bottles to each nest. I was told by several persons who had watched the operation with interest, that after the female has deposited her eggs in these clay bottles, the male brings a live caterpillar, probably as food for the young when first hatched, and after depositing it in the bottles, seals them up hermetically, and turns his back upon the spot with the proud consciousness of having done his duty at once as a skilful handicraftsman and a dutiful parent. After an interval of some weeks, a hole is found pierced in the clay amphoræ, through which the young brood have escaped.

About six o'clock we caught sight of our tents in a deep wadi below us, and in half an hour more gladly dismounted, after having been eleven hours in the saddle (I had been fortunate enough to pick up, second-hand, a good English saddle and bridle at Jerusalem). The astonishment and chagrin of our companions was great when they learned that we had actually been to Goumrán, and yet had arrived only one hour later than they; for their dragoman had been assuring them all the way that it was impossible we could arrive at Mar Saba before the afternoon of next day. The American gentleman and the Messrs Smith alone were under canvass, the rest of the party having taken up their quarters at the convent. A good wash and a cup of strong coffee set us up wonderfully; and when we sat down an hour afterwards to dinner, we had well-nigh forgotten our fatigues. The Smiths came over and spent an hour with us to hear our adventures and to arrange plans for the morrow.

Towards ten o'clock the whole valley looked so lovely under the light of a bright full moon, that we resolved to walk down to the convent, which was only a quarter of an hour distant, though invisible from our tents by a turn in the wadi. We set out with one of Mahmoud's men as our guardian, Graham and Sim being provided with their revolvers. The character of the wadi completely changes when it turns to the south-east, where it assumes the appearance of a wild chasm shut in by walls of rock 300 feet high. The horizontal strata of limestone rise regularly one above another, having all the appearance of cyclopean mason-work. Through this chasm, which is very tortuous in its course, the Kedron in its better days made its way into the Dead Sea; and from the description given by other travellers, I believe it is still wilder and more picturesque in appearance below the convent. The path leading to the latter gradually ascends to the summit of the cliffs; and as we walked along talking together we heard an echo repeating with remarkable exactness every word that was spoken, even though uttered in the lowest whisper. It had only a single repetition, but we all agreed that we had never heard a more perfect mimic echo. After trying its power with names, speeches, and snatches of poetry and song, my friends began to fire their revolvers in rapid succession, little dreaming that they were disturbing the repose of any but the echo. Presently, however, as we were returning after having had a view of the convent, we met Mahmoud, the Bedouin Sheikh, and several of their followers running towards us in breathless haste. In that country, where the Arab's ear is ever on the watch for signs of warfare or surprisal, the sound of musketry

often repeated had awakened alarm for our safety, as they supposed we had been attacked by some stranger Bedouins. The cause of alarm was speedily explained to them; but there were others more seriously alarmed, who spent an uneasy night. The monks of the convent are on bad terms with the Bedouins around, and live in a state of perpetual siege. As we were but a few paces from it when the firing took place, they imagined that it was a party of their enemies coming to attack them, and made all preparations in their power for defence. Some of them kept dreary watch and ward all the night; and it was only when we rode to the convent in the morning that they became acquainted with the actual cause of alarm.

Next morning we were in the saddle by a quarter past seven, and rode to the convent to pick up our fellow-travellers who had lodged there, as we had resolved to accompany them to Bethlehem, Wadi Urtas, and the Pools of Solomon, rather than return by the direct road to Jerusalem up the Wadi en Nár, by which we sent off the baggage. The Convent of St Saba is situated on the southern side of the ravine, in a cleft between two hills, and looks down it to the east. It has all the appearance of a fortress, surrounded on the land side by a high wall, and strongly defended at every entrance by bolts and bars. When we were admitted, the Arabs were all carefully excluded. The perpendicular rocks are a sufficient protection against any attack from Wadi en Nár. The low gateway opens upon a courtyard, at the right side of which is a small chapel built over the tomb of Mar Saba, who lived in the time of the Emperor Justinian. On the left is the church of the convent, which, though small, is handsome, and kept in good preservation. Like all Greek churches, it is gilded to excess, is paved with marble, and contains a number of tolerable paintings on wood, which are disfigured by silver crowns over the heads of the saints. We found our fellow-travellers each in possession of a large carpeted room, having broad divans round the walls. From the account they gave of themselves, I fancy they would have passed a more comfortable night in their own tents, as they soon became sensible of the presence of vermin. The monks belong to the Greek Church; but like their brethren at Mount Sinai and Jerusalem, it is a rare exception to find a real Greek among them—they are for the most part either Bulgarians or Russians, and the convent is supported by Russia. Lynch states that ‘the monks are popular with the wandering tribes;’ but this is not the case, for the monks freely acknowledged to us that the Bedouins were not on good terms with them. There is a postern which leads down to a well in the ravine, on which they depend for

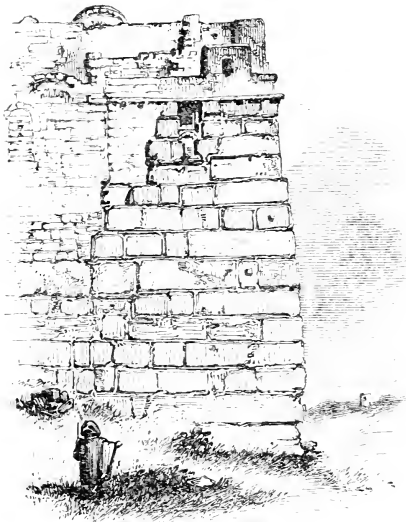
water; and the habit of the Bedouins is to lie in wait for them there, and if surprised, to keep them prisoners till they are ransomed by the Superior. This is the state of things now, though they boast that the convent has been in existence for 1400 years! It is the most effective commentary on the useless life they lead. In the sides of the ravine opposite the convent there are many artificial caves, which are believed to have been the habitations of the Essenes.<sup>1</sup>

We left the convent at a quarter before eight, and after an hour's ride, during which we were still constantly ascending, we had a fine view of Mount Moriah, with its mosque; the rest of Jerusalem presenting only a confused mass of buildings, domes, and minarets behind it. About an hour and a half after leaving the convent, riding still in a south-westerly direction, we came upon a ruin on the slope of a hill rising out of a deep wadi. It is built of large hewn stones, and there is a pool of considerable size, from fifteen to twenty feet deep, beside it. The Arabs call it Birket Deir Ibn Abet. It appears to have been an isolated building; but we could learn nothing of its history, neither why it was called Deir (a convent), nor who the son of Abet was. We passed through the ruins of a deserted modern village shortly after, but there was not a human being in sight from whom we could learn its name. Before reaching Bethlehem we rode through the plain to the eastward of it, which is supposed by the monks to have been the place where the angel appeared to the shepherds, and saw about half a mile to the left the chapel which marks the spot called 'The House of the Shepherds.' As we approached within three or four miles of the town, we found the ground everywhere carefully cultivated, and the low hills around planted with vines. The culture of the vine here and farther north is different from what I have ever seen in other countries, or even at Hebron. The plants, instead of being supported on stakes, are trained along the ground, which must not only destroy much of the fruit, but also waste much valuable space. This may arise partly from the great scarcity of wood; but I also suspect that it was the ancient mode of cultivation practised in the country, as the vines on Lebanon are trained in the same manner. At Bethlehem I procured one of those curious plants called the rose of Jericho (*anastatica hierichuntica*), though they grow much farther south towards the extremity of the Dead Sea. It is not a species of rose at all, but resembles one from its small yellow branches being gathered together in a circle like a full-blown rose. The peculiarity of this plant is, that though perfectly dead, when put into water

<sup>1</sup> See Pliny's description.—*Hist. Nat.*, Lib. v. cap. 17.

its branches expand till they become flat, and when taken out they gradually resume their puckered-up appearance. The specimen I have in my possession, though it has been two years and a half out of the ground, still continues to expand whenever it is put into water.

As the reader has already accompanied me in the excursion we made to the Pools of Solomon and Beit Zakariyah, we must now return to Jerusalem to prepare for the journey to the north. Though I had been obliged to give up, previous to starting for the Jordan, through the extreme badness of the weather, an excursion I had resolved on down Wadi Hammich to Gaza, returning by Yaffa and Beit Ur, etc., I still had hoped to accompany the Messrs Sampsons to Yaffa on the day after our return from Mar Saba, so as to get a glimpse of the ancient sea-port of Jerusalem; but when the morning came it poured again as if another deluge was about to happen. To face it was a matter of necessity for them, as their places were fixed in the French steamer for Alexandria next day; but as no such necessity lay on me, I gave up this last bit of my programme with as much philosophy as I could muster, in the hope that at some future day, and at a better season of the year, it may perchance be my good fortune to complete my visit to that interesting region.



South-east angle of the tower at Jericho (1861).



## CHAPTER XI.

## JERUSALEM TO TIBERIAS.

A WEEK OR TWO previous to my arrival in El Khúds, a solitary traveller had found his way thither by some round-about path, bringing tidings of an attack which had been made by Bedouins on a party of Americans and English, on their way southward from Beyrout, at Jacob's Well, in the vicinity of Nablous. Paralyzed with fear, the rest of the party had fled back to Beyrout, and the Rev. Dr Prince alone made out his purposed journey, bringing the tidings of this disaster. Among the first pieces of intelligence, therefore, which met me, was the agreeable one, that if I wished to go northward to Beyrout and Damascus it must be by sea, as the wild tribes of the Desert had come across the Jordan, and had attacked and wounded a party at Nablous; and that Her Most Gracious Majesty's Consular Representative would prevent me from running the hazard of my life by refusing to sign my passport, or by putting my mukhari in durance, or by some other equally potent and despotic operation. Mr Finn, however, confined himself to the intimation, that it was impossible for me to journey alone to Nablous until further tidings reached Jerusalem of the disposition of Ishmael's promising progeny. These tidings, however, arrived before I had been a fortnight in Jerusalem, and they were of a nature to dissipate fear. The Rev. Mr Klein of Nazareth, and his invalid wife, had passed through Nablous without an escort, and found everything quiet. The attack had arisen from the party riding through a wheat field to Jacob's Well, contrary to the warning cries of the Arabs. The person wounded had been left behind on a slow charger, when his companions, imitating the example of their cowardly dragoman, had fled at the top of their horses' speed to Nablous, and a Bedouin, emboldened by the flight of the party, had struck the lag-behind with a spear; but the perpetrators of the outrage had fled, and there was nothing now to fear beyond the usual turbulent, fanatical disposition of the inhabitants of the Nablous district. I was counselled on all hands, however, not to go alone, as

I had done hitherto, and as for the sake of liberty in my researches I should have preferred still to do; and therefore delayed my departure for a few days, till the Messrs Fletcher and Smith had completed their survey of Jerusalem, in order to ride north with them. Most pleasant and agreeable companions they were, and I had but one cause of regret in all our journey to Beyrout, viz., that each of them was in a greater hurry than the other to arrive at that sea-port, and to embark for Constantinople, where our own troops and those of our French allies were already disembarking. To keep company with those who were thus riding almost against time, and at the same time to carry on my observations by halting or turning aside when I pleased, was out of the question; and therefore I shall dwell more briefly on my journey to Beyrout.

On the morning of 20th March we left Hauser's Hotel at nine o'clock, and took our departure from the city by the Yaffa Gate. Mr Graham, and two other gentlemen who had arrived a day or two before at our Hotel, rode out with us to bring us on our way. Passing the tomb of the Kings we crossed the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and soon arrived at the spot where we were to look for the last time on Jerusalem. It was from a shoulder of Scopus over which the Nablous road passes. Frightful though the weather had been, my sojourn within its walls had been a season of great intellectual and of some spiritual enjoyment also; and now, when gazing upon it for the last time I felt as melancholy and depressed as if I were leaving a much loved friend behind. And such there were within its walls—among whom I had observed with regret some traces of the want of that brotherly unity which ought at least to bind together those who all belong to the same communion, and on whose behalf I could use the language of the Psalmist, 'For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say, Peace be within thee.' But still more appropriate to the aspirations of a Christian's soul for the welfare of ransomed Israel, and for the coming of that time 'when the nations shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks, and shall learn war no more,' are the words, 'Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek thy good.'—Psalm cxxii. 6-9. There was, I think, a unanimous expression from all the party of a hope, that if it were God's will we might gaze once more on the earthly Jerusalem; but if not, there is the heavenly Jerusalem which excels in glory, in which I trust we shall all find a place.

About an hour after leaving we passed to the left the little village of Sahafát, already mentioned as probably occupying the site of Nob,<sup>1</sup> and Beit Hanína still farther distant. Somewhere among the heaps of stones by the wayside opposite these villages, it is alleged that a fallen Roman milestone still exists entire, but all our efforts to discover it proved unavailing. In the vicinity of Tel el Fúl, the camel-path to Yaffa by El Jib and Beit Ur strikes off to the left. Two hours' ride from the Holy City brought us to the ruins called Kharbet er Ram, which lie to the right hand of the road within ten minutes of the village of that name. Another hour brought us to Bireh, during which interval we had passed on a hill to the left the ruins of a village called Attára (Ataroth). Bireh is the ancient Beer or Beeroth of the tribe of Benjamin. It is of somewhat larger dimensions than most of the neighbouring villages, and it still retains some remains of antiquity: among the rest, a large birket still full of water, round which a number of women were engaged in washing as we passed. The Khan which once existed here for the reception of travellers is now in ruins; and the Tobin party, who were storm-staid in this village for two days and afterwards obliged to return to Jerusalem, gave a sorry account of the accommodation they obtained in one of the houses, where they were obliged to share with the family, the dragoman and the mules, a single apartment, through the roof of which the rain descended in copious streams. There are in the village the ruins of a Christian church which was erected by the Crusaders. Beer originally belonged to the Gibeonites, and fell with the rest of their cities to the lot of the tribe of Benjamin; but there is little mention afterwards made of it in Scripture, except as the temporary abode of Jotham, Gideon's son, when he fled before his half-brother Abimelech; and as one of the places whose inhabitants joined Sheba, the son of Bichri, a Benjamite, in his conspiracy against David.—Judges ix. 21; 2 Samuel xx. 14. There is an interesting tradition with regard to it in later times, which, though only of monkish origin, may be perfectly true, viz., that it was at Beeroth, on their journey towards Nazareth, that Joseph and Mary missed the child Jesus, when returning to Jerusalem in search of him, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors:—Luke ii. 44. If the Galileans on their return took the nearest way home, braving the hatred of the Samaritans, the distance of Bireh from

<sup>1</sup> De Sauley makes this the scene of Alexander's meeting with the high priest, forgetful that the conqueror came up from Gaza, and that from this village Jerusalem is entirely *unseen*; whereas Josephus tells us that Sapha was so called from a prospect which it afforded of Jerusalem and the temple.

Jerusalem makes it very probable that this might be the termination of the first day's journey. At the same time it must be borne in mind that, probably to avoid an encounter with these enemies, the Galileans were in the habit of ascending to the feasts by a road along the eastern side of Jordan, crossing that river in the neighbourhood of Jericho, and journeying from thence to the Holy City. This route our Lord followed when He came up for the last time to Jerusalem previous to His crucifixion, and it was on the other side of Jordan that the young ruler had his interview with him.—Mark x. 1, 17, 46.

After bidding adieu to my friend Mr Graham and his companions at Bîreh, we began to descend into a deep wadi, which probably formed the boundary between the tribes of Benjamin and Ephraim. The mountains of the latter tribe lay before us, among which to the north-east was the rock Rimmon. As we got near the bottom of the wadi, we passed to the left a low cavern supported by pillars, and full of water, from which a stream ran across our path. It probably was originally a tomb, into which the waters of some neighbouring spring have found their way, as it is much too shallow ever to have been used as a cistern. About three quarters of an hour after leaving Bîreh, we came to a beautiful spring by the side of the road, just as we began to ascend the hill on the northern side of the wadi. Our mîkharis called it Ain Bètin, and we halted by the side of it for half an hour for lunch. Another quarter of an hour brought us to the top of the hill, where an uneven plateau stretched out before us, on which, about five minutes to the right, are the ruins of Bètin, the ancient Bethel, and the still more ancient Luz, where Jacob had his dream on the way to Padan-aram, and vowed his vow, and where Jeroboam set up one of his golden calves to turn Israel from the Temple at Jerusalem—a policy as short-sighted for the prosperity of his own house, as it was in the end ruinous to the nation of Israel. Thus, in four hours, we had ridden from the ancient capital of the kingdom of Judah to the frontier town of the kingdom of Israel; and considering that a ten hours' ride at the slow pace of the muleteer is sufficient to traverse the whole kingdom of Judah from Hebron to its northern frontier, it is not a matter of surprise that, after the revolt in Rehoboam's day, it never should have attained to any celebrity among the nations, other than what attached to it from its capital being 'the City of God.' The disobedience of the poor prophet of Judah, who was sent to prophesy against Jeroboam and his altar at Bethel, appeared as one stood on the spot the more inexcusable; for the command not to eat or drink within the precincts of the kingdom of Israel

involved no great self-denial, as an hour at the utmost would have brought him beyond the line to which the prohibition extended. The words of the prophet have been fulfilled. 'Bethel shall come to nought' (Amos v. 5), for it is not inhabited. The ruins are, for the most part, those of a modern village, which only confirms more strikingly the fulfilment of the prediction, as its ancient grandeur has entirely disappeared. A large ancient birket, however, still remains, though on one side it is much broken down.<sup>1</sup>

I had heard from Mr Finn that he had discovered in the neighbourhood of Beitin the ruins of Ai (Aiath of Isaiah x. 28), which Joshua destroyed; but our mukharis knew nothing of them, and there was no one belonging to the neighbourhood near to whom we could apply. Mr Van de Velde, however, visited them in company with Mr Finn; and from the description he gives of them as being in the neighbourhood of Deir Diwan. I should think they lie too far south-east of Bethel to answer the description given in Scripture of Ai. Miss Chesney afterwards told me that some of the men accompanying her party pointed out to the eastward of Beitin ruins which they called Rejem Ai. That Ai lay directly east of Bethel, we know for certain; because, when Abraham pitched his tent on a mountain to the east of the latter, he had 'Bethel on the west, and Hai on the east.'—Gen. xii. 8. There were two or three hills in sight to the east of Bethel, on one of which, about a quarter of a mile distant, are the ruins of a castle called Burj el Beitin, which may possibly have been the one where the Patriarch built an altar to the Lord.

In ten minutes after regaining the road, we exchanged the bare hills which lie between Jerusalem and Bethel for rich cultivation. The country around was laid out in vineyards and orchards, the abundance of almond trees in the latter showing that the country might still be appropriately called Luz (Almond Tree). A very extensive valley lay below us to the westward, which bears the name of Wadi Jufna, and the hills beyond it were covered with wood. On a small eminence in the bottom of this valley, we saw a village of some size called Jufna; and on a hill farther north another, to which our men gave the name of Jibía. The former is the ancient Gophna, frequently mentioned by Josephus as a town which gave its name to the surrounding district or toparchy, and by which Titus passed on his march from Cæsarea to Jerusalem.<sup>2</sup> The latter Dr Robinson supposes, with great probability, to have been

<sup>1</sup> Dr Wilson states its size at 100 paces by 75.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. v., cap. 2.

the Gibeah, or hill of Phinehas in Mount Ephron, where Eleazar the priest was buried. He suggests the possibility that the name Gophna may come from Ophni, one of the towns of the tribe of Benjamin; but Dr Wilson assumes it as a matter beyond dispute, and, besides, proposes to find in this Jibía the Gaba of Benjamin, mentioned along with Ophni, because it is connected with the Bethel cluster of towns, and not with that of Beeroth farther south. 'It would appear,' he adds, 'from the erection of the golden calf at Bethel by Jeroboam, that part of the tribe of Benjamin was lost to the government of Judah.'<sup>1</sup> There does not appear a tittle of evidence in support of this theory. That there was a place named Bethel which belonged to Benjamin is certain; but a comparison of the passages in which the northern boundary of Benjamin and the southern of Ephraim are mentioned, gives room to doubt whether Benjamin's Bethel was the ancient Luz; but granting that it was so, it is clear that Benjamin possessed that single town on the *outside* of his border; for it is expressly stated that the border line was drawn to the *southward* of Luz, which is Bethel; and far from turning away for miles to the north-west so as to embrace Jufna and Jibía, we are told that it descended from thence to Ataroth Adar, which was a place on the border of the plain of Sharon, to the *south* of Bethhoron on the nether, which itself is far to the south of Jufna. —Joshua xvi. 1-3, compared with xviii. 13.

We soon lost sight of the Wadi Jufna, as our road descended into a deep narrow wadi, the high hills on each side of which were terraced and planted with fig and olive trees, and from which a branch wadi runs eastward towards the village of Taiyibeh. Near this on the hill, there was a pretty village called Yebrúd, and a fountain bearing the same name, at the opening of a wadi on the western side, thickly planted with olive groves, which leads towards Jufna. About half-past two we had entered the Wadi el Jib, and at three o'clock came to Ain el Haramiyah, or 'the Fountain of Thieves,' at which there is a birket built with massive stones, but now in a ruinous condition. The valley is often called Wadi el Haramiyah from this fountain. It is a very narrow one, richly clothed with olive trees, and would afford thieves a favourable opportunity for pouncing upon unwary travellers. The contrast is most striking between the generally barren appearance of the country of Judah, and the rich luxuriance of that of Ephraim. Another hour and a quarter introduced us into a wide valley, a considerable portion of which was under cultivation; and at half-past four

<sup>1</sup> Wilson, *Lands of Bible*, Vol. ii. p. 41.

we halted in it for the night, having the village of Sinjil on the hill above us to the west, and another called Turmus Aya, towards the eastern end of the valley, about a mile and a half distant.

I have mentioned elsewhere, in speaking of the Syrian mukharis, that the rascal with whom I had made a contract, after having been a fortnight engaged, refused at the last moment, when the baggage was nearly loaded and we were actually in our saddles, to stir a step unless I took an additional mule of which I had no need. I stormed to no purpose, for I was in his power; he knew that I must either go with those who were already in their saddles, or renounce the journey by Nablous; so Shaheen was left behind to get the matter settled, and to bring up the baggage as rapidly as possible. I had to wander about, however, for a couple of hours after our arrival at the camping-ground before my tent arrived. Some of the people from Sinjil came down at nightfall, and insisted on the necessity of our having guards to protect us from robbers during the night; and as my fellow-travellers consented, I said nothing against it at the time, though it was evidently a concerted matter between the dragoman and muleteers to save themselves from trouble. The same thing, however, occurred the two following nights; and as it appeared we were to be saddled with this additional and unnecessary expense during the whole journey, I spoke to the Messrs Smith about it, and was glad to find that they were as much opposed to it as I was; so the dragomen were informed that they must keep watch themselves, as we would pay for no more guards. It is unnecessary to add that we were quite as safe, and a great deal more quiet without them.

*21st March.*—While we were waiting for the loading of the mules this morning, one of those outlandish machines called a *Takterawán* passed by on its return to Jerusalem, after having conveyed Mrs Klein of Nazareth to Nablous. It is in shape like a huge snuffer-dish, to which a four-posted shower-bath and curtains are fixed at one end, with two long poles attached horizontally. To these one mule is yoked in front, and another behind; and as this clumsy litter is the only substitute which Syria can offer for a carriage, invalids are obliged to have recourse to it. The same primitive system of conveyance still exists in Sicily for travelling in the interior where there are no roads; but the march of improvement has so far advanced there, that a sedan chair on mules is substituted for the *Takterawán*, with its wide curtains fluttering in the breeze, and leaving the patient exposed to rain or sun-beams, as the case may be. When we were ready to mount, one of the fellahin from Sinjil came up to us, bearing

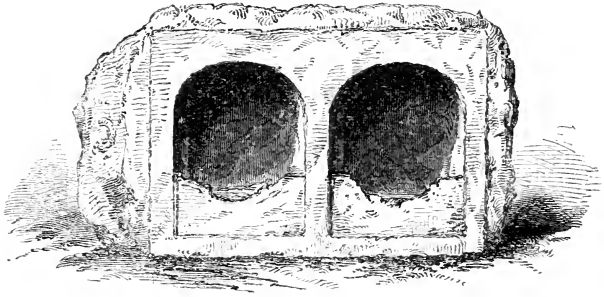
a gilt-edged book in his hand, which we soon recognised to be a Bible. He told us that he had found it on the road the year before, and he brought it in the hope that we would buy it from him. On examining it, I was much interested to find that it was a Scotch Bible, and that it had belonged to a brother clergyman, for it bore the name of 'Rev. William Brown, Perth.' There was also written on the fly-leaf, probably in remembrance of the visit, 'Jerusalem 1853.' Though not personally acquainted with the owner, I wished, of course, to have the pleasure of restoring to him his missing Bible, feeling sure it would be doubly prized after being 'lost and found;' so I offered the man a sum which would have bought it three times over when new; but possibly he supposed it the divining-book which the Arabs imagine all Franks carry with them for the discovery of hidden treasure; for he indignantly refused the offer, and left us as rapidly as he came. Should Mr Brown's eye ever fall on these pages, he will know where his missing Bible is, and that a countryman made an effort at least to restore it to him.

The ancient Shiloh lies not far from Sinjil, and I was resolved to visit it, even though I should go alone; but on this occasion my fellow-travellers were quite disposed to accompany me, as the end of our day's journey was to be Nablous, which is only four hours' ride from Sinjil. Instead of going down the valley to Turinus Aya, as is usually done, and then following up the wadi which leads to Shiloh, we struck right across the former, and, ascending the hills on the northern side, about half a mile above the Nablous road, rode among the brushwood in a straight line for the ruins, which we saw on a hill before us to the north-east. A deep wadi intervened, and the descent to it was by a series of uncomfortable slips and leaps, which our animals managed in a wonderful manner; but at length these obstacles were surmounted, and in an hour from the time of leaving Sinjil we were among the ruins of Seilún. They are those of a comparatively modern village, but occasionally ancient pillars and large stones are found among them, denoting that at an earlier age a town has stood there. A little to the south of the village there still stands a square tower one storey high, ruinous, but covered with a roof, which the natives call a mosque, though it was not built for any such purpose, nor is it now used as such. A fine oak tree spreads its branches over it for a covering. The interest of Shiloh centres in its having been the dwelling-place of the Tabernacle and of the Ark for a period of at least 400 years; but as there is no water near the village, it is clear they could not have stood there; I therefore begged our guide to conduct us to the Ain Seilún.



We descended into a narrow wadi to the east of the village, and following its course to the north-east between high ledges of rock which are perforated with tombs (the stones at the door of some of which were still entire), we arrived in fifteen minutes from the village at the fountain of Shiloh. The wadi here opens up into a basin surrounded by hills. The fountain is in the side of one of those to the west, and supplies a pool which lies a little lower down on the other side of the path. At the bottom of a square shaft eight feet deep, built with hewn stones, we found an Arab girl filling her water-skin from a small running stream which issued from underneath the hill, through an aqueduct similarly constructed. How far back it goes into the hill, and where the spring is from which the water flows, neither our Sinjil guide nor the girl at the fountain could tell. In the bottom of that basin I have little doubt Joshua set up the Tabernacle of the congregation after all its wanderings in the wilderness were over, and here it stood till the days of good old Eli. I fancied to myself the old blind man sitting on a stone by the way-side, in that narrow wadi through which we had just passed, 'his heart trembling for the Ark of God,' when his godless sons had borne it away to battle against the Philistines; and the solemn procession which conveyed his body to one of the rock sepulchres hard by, and probably laid by his side his unfortunate daughter-in-law. Here the child Samuel learned the duties of the priesthood, and first heard the voice of God denouncing punishment against the family of his benefactor; and here, too, in the time of the Judges, when the maidens of Israel had assembled in dances during the feast, the proscribed children of Benjamin obtained their wives by a stroke of which the famed rape of the Sabines was but a humble imitation. I was much surprised to find by the side of the fountain a very ancient double trough, which, so far as I know, no previous traveller has taken any notice of, and which confirms the probability that the Tabernacle stood on this spot. It is cut out of an immense isolated block of stone carefully dressed in front, about ten feet long and nearly as many in height. The troughs were each about three feet in width, and stood two feet above the level of the ground. They were divided from one another by a wall of the solid rock, and arched overhead about four feet above the troughs, the fronts of which have been much broken away. I have little doubt that these, standing as they do by the side of the fountain, were designed for the use of the Tabernacle in 'the divers washings' which the Levitical ritual enjoined. A wood-cut taken from a sketch I made at the time will give the reader some idea of this ancient and interesting relic. This

visit to the place where God had first set His name in Israel ere he had made choice of Zion, was a deeply solemnizing as well as interesting one. It affords a striking illustration of 'the candlestick removed out of its place;' and the desolate stillness which reigns around recalls with wondrous power the well-known words: 'Go ye now unto my place which was in Shiloh, where I set my name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my people Israel.'—Jer. vii. 12.



We retraced our steps to the tower beside the ruined village, and by this time a dozen or fifteen of the fellahin from the neighbourhood had assembled, who exhibited symptoms of incivility and ill-humour. From what I afterwards learned from my own dragoman, it appears that one of the others, a Greek, who had undertaken to pay the guard at Sinjil, had given only a tithe of the sum for which we were charged, and had pocketed the rest; and the guide who had accompanied us from that village had stirred up his neighbours to espouse his cause, and compel us to pay him more. The inhabitants of Seilún are notorious for their lawlessness, and were resolved, besides aiding a neighbour, to extract something for themselves by intimidation. They were all armed with muskets; some of them had unslung them, and were carrying them in their hands as if they meant to use them, while they swore at us in a very excited way. The first act of incivility was towards the younger Mr Fletcher and myself. We went to the door of the tower to examine the inside, when one of them thrust his arm across it and drove me violently back. Finding that they were in this unfriendly mood, we remounted and were about to ride off, when the same fellow who had thrust me back seized Mr Fletcher's bridle, who immediately applied the handle of a heavy hunting-whip to his head with a hearty good-will. The bridle was released in an instant, and the bully slunk off; but the state of matters between the parties changed as rapidly. Quick as thought, they formed in a line, and

every musket was pointed at us. Our weapons of defence were out in a moment, and we mustered a double-barrelled rifle, six pistols, four of which were revolvers, and a sword. In this state we remained watching each other full five minutes; and coward though I found Shaheen to be in two or three instances, I must do him the justice to say that, on that occasion, he behaved remarkably well. The offending dragoman, being a Christian, dared not utter a word, and the task of endeavouring to pacify or terrify the Arabs devolved on him alone. He assured the Sinjil man that the Howajees knew nothing of the fraud which had been practised upon them, and that he would be paid. To the others, he launched out in a splendid panegyric of the fearful pistols the Franjees carried, each of which could kill six men without stopping to be loaded, and that, if they fired a shot, every one of them would be killed. His argument produced its effect; the fact that we were all well armed, and that we sat coolly awaiting their decision, some of the company being prepared to return every shot with interest, led them to waver in their purpose. At length the ringleader, declaring that we were dangerous men, and that he would go no farther with us, set off down the wadi, followed by his companions; and thus, through the kind interposition of Providence, terminated a scene which seemed at one time certain to end in the spilling of blood.

We were still, however, in a difficult position, for neither of the dragomen knew the way by which we could regain the Nablous road; but Shaheen, having explained to us how the Sinjil man had been treated, and assured him that the Howajees would pay him what had been stipulated for the night before, and give a backshish besides, he resumed his post as quietly as if nothing had happened, and soon put us on the path. The offending dragoman was well rated by his masters for his dishonesty, by which he had exposed the whole party to danger. This is one of the consequences of the contract system; the backshish to various parties on the journey is not included; and the dragomen, while charging their masters a very liberal sum in every instance, pay but a few piastres, and pocket the rest. The Sinjil man had a legitimate cause of discontent; but the conduct of the men of Seilún can only be attributed to the lawlessness and love of robbery for which they have an unenviable notoriety. A party who followed us, and whom I afterwards met at Beyrout, had also met with annoyance from them, though not of so serious a character.

After a ride of ten minutes down a deep wadi running to the west, we got to the Nablous road, which comes over the hill nearly in a

direct line from Sinjil into this valley, passing by the ruined khan and fountain of Lebbán. In little more than five minutes after we got into the road, the wadi turns to the north and opens up into a fine broad plain, well cultivated, through which it took us an hour to ride. At 9.15 we had on a hill to the left a pretty-looking village, surrounded by groves of olive trees, called also Lebbán, in which the ancient LEBONAH can be clearly recognised; and, indeed, if there had existed previously any doubt in our minds that the place from which we had just come was the true Shiloh, its exact agreement with the description given of the latter, in Judges xxi. 19, in connection with Lebonah and other places, would have made assurance perfect: 'Behold, there is a feast of the Lord in Shiloh yearly, which is on the north side of Bethel; on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah.' At 9.35 we were opposite another village on a spur of the range of hills to the left called Es Sawíh, and shortly afterwards we passed a ruined khan by the way-side bearing the same name. The wadi here ended in a steep descent facing the north-west, bringing us into another deep narrow wadi which took its rise to the east, and ran down towards the plain of Sharon in a south-west direction. Looking up this valley eastward, there is a pretty village called Kubalán on the hills to the right, embowered among trees, and nearly opposite it, on a *tell* to the left side, there is another nearly in ruins called Yetma, which stands bleak and bare, a perfect foil to its neighbour's beauty. We did little more than cross this wadi, as the path to Nablous leads over a high hill which forms part of its northern boundary.

While ascending it we met a large company of horsemen coming our way, whom at first we took for a detachment of Turkish cavalry. They turned out to be the Governor of Nablous, with his body-guard of Turkish soldiers, and a number of the most influential Sheikhs belonging to that department, on their way to pay their respects to Kiamil Pasha, the new Governor of Southern Syria, whom I had seen enter Jerusalem in state two days before leaving. Some of the Sheikhs were noble-looking fellows, and rode superb horses. The Nablousian Governor was one of those specimens of a Turkish officer with which, through the daily press, the English public is now tolerably familiar; the chief feature being a blue surtout garnished with enormous brass buttons, with a fat, meaningless, fez-capped face emerging from one end of it, and a paunch that would tame an alderman's pride and excite his envy, from the other. His secretary, pipe-bearer, and a number of other menials, rode in his train. One elderly man with grizzly

beard and restless eye, particularly struck us as he rode past among the Sheikhs; and immediately the cry arose among our dragomen and mukharis that he was Abou Goosh. This man is reckoned a kind of hero by the common people round Jerusalem. He is the Sheikh of a village bearing his name in the defile through which the road passes from Jerusalem to Yaffa; and he was some years ago the most noted robber in all the district. He had at length been apprehended for robbery and murder, and had enjoyed the benefit of a voyage to Constantinople, and a *séjour* there in that awful pandemonium, the *bagne*, for some years. He had not returned to Syria much more than a year and a half before we saw him; and it is said his forced visit to the capital has sobered him, and that he has now settled down into a virtuous country gentleman. *Nous verrons!* In the meantime, my interest in him arose from a curious incident which befel my friends, Mrs Dingwall Fordyce, and the Rev. Mr and Mrs Macdonald of Blairgowrie, the year before. Journeying in a deluge of rain towards Jerusalem, they were overtaken with darkness, and lost the path. After wandering for a while, they stumbled upon a village, and asked for shelter at the door of one of its miserable dwellings. According to the notions of Arab hospitality the request could not be refused, though the consent was given grudgingly. A fire was lighted on the hearth, their clothes were dried, and the evening meal prepared; but the unfriendly demeanour and furtive bloodthirsty glances of their host rendered them very uncomfortable. Had they known where they were, they would probably have passed an anxious sleepless night; but in happy unconsciousness they slept, and morning saw them depart without harm or loss from the inhospitable dwelling. They had been in the very jaws of the lion, for their host was the famous robber chief Abou Goosh; but the Shepherd of Israel had led them to the only house in the village where, had he been bent on robbing them, they were safe. The man himself, during that evening, must have endured a moral conflict, which sufficiently accounted for his suspicious looks and rugged demeanour. The stern laws of Arab hospitality warred against his thirst for gold, and eventually triumphed. How he came on the present occasion to be riding in company with the authorities and notabilities of Nablous, we were unable to ascertain.

We had scarcely passed the last stragglers of the cavalcade ere we reached the summit of the hill, where a new and exciting prospect was unfolded to our view. Below us lay a long wide fertile valley called Wadi Múkhna, which extends towards the north far beyond the entrance of the valley in which Nablous stands. Bounding this

wadi to the left, at a couple of hours distance, was a pile of mountains streaked with layers of chalk, famous both in the history of early Israel and of the Samaritans. It includes both Mount Gerízim and Mount Ebal; but the former obstructed all view of the latter, except in so far as it formed a part of the eastern face of the pile in the far distance. A range of lower hills separates this plain from that of the Jordan on the east. Far away in the north-east rose a majestic mountain covered with snow, which sparkled brightly under the sun's rays. It was Ghebel es Sheikh, the famed Mount Hermon, henceforward to be one of the most prominent landmarks during my journeyings in Syria. The descent to Wadi Múkhna was steeper and more encumbered with stones than the road on the other side of the hill, but our sure-footed animals managed it without any accident. At 10.30 we had opened another wadi to the left, which runs towards the Mediterranean, carrying off the surplus water from Wadi Múkhna. There were two villages in sight in it, about a mile or a mile and a half distant from our path, one bearing the name of Ain Abouís, and the other of Kúza; and just at the southern base of Gerízim, above our path, there was another larger than either of these called Howára. Van de Velde mentions having seen between this and the entrance to the valley of Nablous a ruin in the plain, from which it derives its name, called Ain Múkhna; but it escaped our observation, unless it were a large birket which we saw to the right, not far from Howára. On the opposite side, dotting the low eastern hills, were the villages of Beita, Shúba, Awertah, Azmut, Deir el Hatab, and Sálím. We are indebted to Dr Robinson for the identification of the latter with 'Shalem, a city of Shechem,' to which Jacob came after his return from Padan-aram (Gen. xxxiii. 18); and as his grandfather Abraham also made his first sojourn in Canaan in the neighbourhood of Shechem, it is extremely probable that Wadi Múkhna is none other than 'the plain of Moreh' (Gen. xii. 6), where he pitched his tent.

Nablous is situated in a narrow but beautiful valley, which runs out of the Wadi Múkhna to the west, and is flanked by Mount Gerízim on the south, and Mount Ebal on the north. After skirting the base of Gerízim for an hour beyond Howára, the path ascends a shoulder of the hill, thus cutting off an angle at the entrance of the wadi. We had followed this for a little way ere we perceived that it was taking us entirely away from the plain, when we retraced our steps, in order to visit Jacob's Well, which lay at the base of the promontory, among fields sown with wheat. Many of the fellahin were labouring in the fields around; and when one of our dragomen

dashed across the green corn at a gallop, they immediately began to shout and warn us off, as they had done to the American party when they were attacked. We pulled up to learn what the matter was; and their reasonable request having been explained and carefully attended to by us, we found them, as they crowded round us at the well, perfectly civil and good-natured. It requires an effort of imagination to picture what the well was when Jesus sat upon it, and, conversing with the woman of Samaria, told her of 'the living water, of which if a man drink he shall never thirst again;' for that spurious Christianity which turns to idolatry every place in this land which has, or is supposed to have, any connection with the Saviour's history, has been busy at work here. Some granite pillars, which once belonged to a Christian church that enclosed the well, are still standing only a few yards from it, and the well itself has been vaulted over, and enclosed in a low narrow chamber below the level of the floor where an altar once stood, at which the Greeks said mass.<sup>1</sup> In endeavouring to look into the well, one can see no farther than to the bottom of this little chamber, and the aperture in its floor is so immediately below the one through which access can be had to it, that though the Arabs offered to take us down, not one of the party would venture. I made the attempt indeed; but when I saw the yawning hole below me, I remembered Mr Bonar's Bible, and shrunk back from a similar fate. Dr Wilson's exploit in fishing it up is remembered, and was recounted to us; and one of the bystanders announced himself as the explorer who went down in search of it. By throwing down two or three stones, and listening for the splash when they came in contact with the water, we could not only satisfy ourselves that 'the well was deep,' but also that there was much water in it. I would fain have had a draught of that water of which Jesus had asked to drink; but there was neither rope nor bucket at hand, and the thing was impossible. Thanks be to God there are no such hindrances in drawing water out of 'the wells of salvation,' for the means are always at hand for those who desire to drink of them.

This well of Jacob has been dug at the very entrance of the valley of Shechem on the southern side, and almost in a line with it at the other side is a small domed building resembling a Mohammedan Weli, which is built over the tomb of Joseph. Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians, agree in their belief that this is the tomb of the Egyptian ruler; and from its situation in the neighbourhood of the well, and in the

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's Biblical Researches, vol. iii. p. 109.

parcel of ground which his father gave him, there is every probability that the tradition is correct. The ground lying between the well and this tomb at the junction of the two valleys, is the parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, and the luxuriant crops which were waving on it gave evidence of the peculiar shrewdness of his choice. We now entered the narrow wadi in which Nablous is situated, and which rises very considerably above the plain of Mukhna. About five minutes' ride brought us opposite the ruins of a small town or village, which the Samaritan priest afterwards told me his people believed to be the ancient Sychar. It is generally supposed that Shechem (the present Nablous), and Sychar, are only different names for the same locality; and entertaining that opinion Dr Robinson says, 'A very obvious question presented itself to us upon the spot,—How can it be supposed that the woman should have come from the city, now half an hour distant, with her water-pot to draw water from Jacob's well, when there are so many fountains just around the city, and she must also have passed directly by a large one at mid distance?'—John iv. 5. The answers which he endeavours to give to this question, though ingenious, are by no means satisfactory. He supposes that she was labouring in the neighbouring fields, or that she attached a peculiar value to the water of Jacob's Well, and hence took an hour's walk for the purpose of drawing water from it. The difficulty is entirely removed if we adopt the Samaritans' belief, which, by the way, I found to be held also by our consular agent, that this ruined place in the immediate vicinity of the well is Sychar, a totally different locality from Shechem. From this village she might either go westward to the fountain of El Defna, which is a little above the ruins, or to the well below it, for the purpose of drawing water; and as they are nearly equidistant, it is easy to understand why she should give the preference to the Patriarch's well. Considering that Shechem is fully half an hour distant from this well, the ruined village seems best to agree with the Gospel narrative, which describes it as 'near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.'—John iv. 5. Besides, the account of her leaving her water-pot and rushing into the city favours the idea that it was close at hand, for she could scarce expect to find the traveller still there when she returned from Shechem after an absence of more than an hour.

As we proceeded up the valley we passed Ain el Defna, the fountain referred to above, from which copious rills of water were flowing down towards El Mukhna. We also passed, in a small recess among



the roots of Mount Gerízim, a Mohammedan Weli over the tomb of one of their saints, called Amúd, and presently entered a grove of venerable olive trees, through the branches of which we caught the first view of the minarets of Nablous. Though the mountains on either side were bare and craggy, the rich vegetation, the flowing streams, and the beautiful groves and gardens which surround the town, formed a most delightful contrast to the bare and barren aspect which hill and dale alike present in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. It was as if one had passed suddenly from the lifeless neglected abode of a hermit to the smiling luxuriance of a royal domain. Instead of entering by the eastern gate, we passed round the northern wall, by the foot of Mount Ebal, enjoying a view of gardens filled with palms and orange trees, figs, and almonds; the latter in full bloom. Having made a complete circuit of the walls, and crossed a stream rushing with impetuosity towards the west, we at last came to our camping ground in another grove of olives just outside the western gate of the town. The cactus, or prickly pear, grows in great abundance along the base of Mount Ebal, the bare face of which is full of ancient tombs; while higher up it is altogether devoid of vegetation, which some people of lively imagination ascribe to its being the mountain from which the curses of the law were read; but Gerizim, which is the mountain of blessing, is very nearly as bare. Its rugged cliffs absolutely overhang a considerable portion of the town, and were an earthquake shock to loosen them, there would be fearful destruction both of life and property.

Nablous is one of the few places in Palestine which has retained the name imposed upon it by the Roman conquerors of the country, instead of its ancient name. There cannot be any doubt that this is the Shechem of the time of Abraham, Jacob, and Joshua; but shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem it had imposed upon it the name of Neapolis, a corruption of which is easily traced in its modern appellation. Though the inhabitants are a most fanatical race, and uttered many a curse against us as we wandered through the streets, it is the only thriving town in the southern part of Syria. There was an air of independence and substantiality about the citizens, and a noise and stir from the number of forges at work, that did one good after the listless, desolate condition of Jerusalem. Our patience, however, was somewhat tried by being followed by groups of urchins, who spit upon us and stoned us, bestowing the while such insulting epithets as *Nazrané*, *Kelb*, etc. Our first visit was to the house of Ahoudi Assam, the British Consular agent, to whom, as well as to the Protestant

schoolmaster, Bishop Gobat had given me letters of introduction. Ahoudi was absent at his office; and while his wife sent to summon him, we were shown into the guest chamber, a nice clean room opening upon a terrace, the only furniture in which was a small cupboard in a corner, containing a quantity of English medicines. The parapet to the terrace was latticed with open brickwork, through which there was a view of the roofs of the town, and of the rugged cliffs of Gerizim. Though not very interesting, we preferred occupying ourselves with a survey of these to sitting in the cold unfurnished apartment. The house adjoining belonged to a Mohammedan, and in the courtyard the women of the harém were moving about unveiled, engaged in various domestic duties. So much we had observed at the first glance; but as there was nothing either in the dames themselves or in their employments to excite any interest, none of the party bestowed another thought upon them. Presently, however, we heard shouting, scolding, and an indescribable shrill vibrating cry, which the Mohammedan women make by putting the tongue to the back of the palate, which had the effect of rousing all the neighbours. Looking down with curiosity to find out the cause of alarm, we found by their gesticulations that it was caused by our presence, and the Sitti Assam came hurriedly on the terrace entreating us to withdraw, as they felt aggrieved at Franks daring to look into the interior of their mansion. The request was instantly complied with, and the master of the house soon made his appearance. He kindly pressed us to take up our abode with him; but the invitation was declined, as we all had our own canvass establishments outside the gate, and after the disturbance we had unconsciously raised, we felt we should enjoy more liberty in them. After a short conversation, during which we learned from him that the population of the town was reckoned at about 8000 souls, of which there were above 400 Greek Christians, 150 Jews, 150 Samaritans, and 40 Protestants, he conducted us up back streets and through arched alleys to the Samaritan synagogue.

It is simply a hall in the house of the priest, who met us at the door along with his father, a frail old man, who had resigned the priesthood to his son some years before. We were not required to put off our boots before entering, as travellers used to be, but the door of the synagogue was at once thrown open, and we were invited to enter. It is a plain apartment without any ornament. The present priest is a tall and remarkably handsome man, apparently about forty years of age, but the furtive glance of his eye imparted an air of cunning to his otherwise pleasant features. We found both

him and his father very communicative. In answer to a question, he informed us that the number of Samaritans in Nablous was 150 souls; that there were none of them to be found in the neighbouring villages; and that they knew of none of their race existing anywhere else in the world save in that city. I then asked some information respecting their observance of the Passover, which Mr Finn told me he had witnessed the previous year. The priest said that they observed the Passover annually upon Mount Gerizim, according as it was first instituted by Moses in the land of Egypt, and that they were obliged to pay every year a large sum to the Governor of Nablous for permission to do so. He told us that it wanted only 22 days to the time when it would be observed, and asked if we should be at Nablous about that time, as we might then see all their ceremonial. Being answered in the negative, the priest told us that they sacrificed seven lambs, as that was sufficient for the number of their families; that they separated the victims from the flock four days before they were to be slain; and that after he had killed them, they were roasted, and eaten by the people standing, as God at first commanded. They reject all the Jewish Scriptures, with the exception of the Pentateuch. They showed us several of their manuscripts: among the rest, one of considerable antiquity, which they wished to palm upon us as the celebrated copy of the Law said to have been written by Abishua, the son of Phinehas. As I was familiar with its appearance from the minute description which Dr Wilson had given of it, I told the priest he was deceiving us, because I knew it was covered with green silk, and begged he would produce it. He seemed somewhat surprised that a stranger should be able thus to describe it, and after a little hesitation the old man went to the Torah and produced the real Simon Pure. The writing is beautifully executed, and though the parchment in some places is much decayed, it is in a marvellous state of preservation, if it be, as represented, upwards of 3000 years old. At parting, the old man was not above asking a backshish for himself, though we had bestowed a handsome one on his son. As the representatives of a race from beyond the Euphrates and from the north of Syria, whom Shalmaneser introduced into the land of Israel after its conquest, whose religion—originally a cross between corrupt Judaism and Pagan idolatry—continued a nondescript even in our Lord's day (2 Kings xvii. 25-33, with John iv. 22), and who, though reduced to a mere handful, still retain a footing in the land where they were planted as colonists about 2600 years ago, we looked upon these Samaritans with the deepest interest: and I could not but

breathe a prayer that God would raise up another Philip to spread joy among them once more, by the preaching of the glad tidings of salvation.

After leaving their synagogue we wandered through the streets, in the middle of each of which there was (rare sight in Palestine) a stream of clear running water. The bazaars, though not very extensive, were well stocked; and besides the manufacture of soap and working in iron, the dyeing trade seems to give occupation to a considerable number of the inhabitants. In the course of our promenade through the town we came to a handsome edifice, now used as a mosque, but which a single glance discovers to have been originally a Christian church. Admission was of course out of the question with so fanatical a population; but Mr Assam told us there is a stone in the court-yard, on which all the Christians resident in Nablous in 1821 were massacred, in retaliation for the war of independence which was being then waged in Greece against the power of Turkey. I have already mentioned the insults we met with from the children, and but for the presence of Mr Assam, who accompanied us through the city, it is not improbable that some of the adults might have joined them. It was the only place in all Syria where we met with such treatment. For Mr Assam's kind attention we were indebted to the letter I had brought him from Jerusalem; and in the evening he called to request a letter to the bishop in return, certifying that he had showed us every attention, which we gave him most willingly. The schoolmaster whom the bishop had stationed at Nablous was also an interesting man. He called on me in the evening, and gave me some account of his school—which had been dismissed before our arrival—and of the meetings he had with the adults for reading the Scriptures and prayer. I believe that since I was there a missionary has been stationed in Nablous.

*March 22.*—Our tents were surrounded this morning, as they had been the day before, by lepers and sturdy beggars, who gave us great annoyance; but having seen our baggage mules despatched by the shortest way towards Sanúr, we started at seven o'clock for Subastiyeh, the ancient Samaria, which lies to the north-west of Nablous. For half an hour our path continued down the rich valley in which Nablous is situated, among orchards and olive groves, by the side of a roaring stream, on which two or three mills have been erected. We then struck across the hills which form the northern boundary of the wadi, and in about an hour after leaving, were abreast of the village of Zawátah, which lay higher up the hill, a little to the right of our

path. At the same time we had an extensive view of the Valley of Nablous and the hills on the southern side of it, situated on which, in the midst of olive groves, were the villages of Ráfídhah, Beit Ibá, and Beit Uzin. There is a charm about this valley from its trees and beautiful verdure, which I experienced nowhere else in the course of my journey, except on the banks of the Barada and in the immediate neighbourhood of Damascus. Shortly after passing Zawátah we descended into another deep wadí, and toiled up a still higher hill on the opposite side; but there were no villages in sight to break the monotony of the scene. From the summit of this second range of hills we looked down into the 'fat valley' of Samaria. Two hours after leaving Nablous we came to a beautiful fountain near the bottom of the valley, called Ain Nakúrah, round which a number of women were gathered drawing water with their earthenware pots, which in this part of the country seem to have superseded the use of water-skins. A village of the same name stood on the hill to the left of our path.

The hill on which Subastíyeh stands was now full in view in the middle of the valley, with its miserable village and a ruin of large dimensions on its eastern side. It is isolated from all the surrounding hills; but the spurs of those to the east approach much nearer to it than the rest, and riding along them till opposite the village, we then turned west, and passing a fountain in the bottom of the valley, and one or two broken columns, began the ascent, which is very steep. The hill seems exceedingly fertile, is terraced to the very summit, and thickly planted with olive trees. The narrow road by which we scrambled up is hemmed in by steep embankments on both sides, composed of broken pillars, capitals, and large stones, which have been rolled down the hill, and have found their respective places without much of man's help. I have no doubt the terraces which encompass the hill have been formed in the same manner, for in this way alone can one account for the total absence of *debris* in the shape of masses of overthrown stones and foundations of edifices on the surface. The present state of the hill of Samaria is a striking fulfilment of the Prophet Micah's prediction:—'Therefore will I make Samaria as a heap of the field and as plantings of a vineyard; and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof.'—Micah i. 6. When I got to my tent in the evening, I read over Dr Keith's comments on the prophecies concerning Samaria, and admired greatly the minuteness and truthfulness of his illustrations. The hill rises about 400 feet above the level of the valley, and is

rather of an oblong shape; but as I viewed it afterwards from near Burka, on the hill to the north of the valley, it had very much the appearance of a crown. When in its glory, with a city set upon it, it must have borne a still more striking resemblance to that regal ornament; and it occurred to me that probably from this circumstance, as well as from its being the capital of the kingdom of Israel, it was called by the Prophet Isaiah 'the crown of pride.'—Isaiah xxviii. 3. This was the hill which Omri, after having reigned eight years in Tirzah, bought of Shemer for two hundred talents of silver, and on which he built the future capital of his kingdom, calling it Samaria, after the man to whom the land originally belonged.

The history of Samaria, like that of Jerusalem, is a very chequered one. The kings of Syria were sometimes its allies and at other times its besiegers. In the straitness of the siege which Benhadad laid to it, women, under the pressure of famine, ate their own children, as some in Jerusalem did in the days of Titus; and in its gates the unbelieving noble was trodden to death as the frantic people rushed for food to the forsaken camp of the Syrians. Naaman, the Syrian general, spread consternation within its walls when he brought a letter from his royal master commanding the King of Israel to cure him of his leprosy. Strong in its natural as well as artificial defences, Shalmaneser, the King of Syria, besieged it for three years before he reduced it, and carried away its inhabitants to a captivity from which, as a nation, they have never returned. In after years it was taken once more and utterly destroyed by Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest; and during the Roman occupation of Syria it was bestowed by Augustus Cæsar as a gift upon Herod, who rebuilt it on a grand scale, changed its name to Sebaste (the august), and erected in it a most magnificent temple in honour of his patron.<sup>1</sup> 'At what time the splendid city of Herod was laid in ruins,' says Robinson, 'we are nowhere informed; but all the notices of the fourth century and later would rather lead us to infer that the destruction had already taken place before that early period.'<sup>2</sup> At all events the Word of the Lord has been fulfilled—'Samaria shall become desolate.'—Hosea xiii. 16. In the name of the present village, Subastiyeh, there is another instance of the retention of the more modern appellation, Sebaste, while the ancient name has been utterly lost. There can be no doubt, however, of its identity with the city of Samaria, for Josephus, in one of the

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud., Lib. i. cap. 2, and Lib. i. cap. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Robinson's Biblical Researches, vol. iii. p. 148.

passages referred to above, says, 'Hyrcanus proceeded as far as Samaria, where is now the city Sebaste.'

The village is a small and very miserable one; and the only striking feature about it is the ruined Church of St John the Baptist, built probably by the Knights of St John, over the place where the Baptist's body is said to have been buried. The walls are still tolerably entire, and inside a small mosque has been erected over the pretended tomb. From thence we heard the hum of children's voices proceeding, and were informed that a moollah kept a school within. We had been led to believe that we should probably encounter here another such scene as we had met with at Shiloh, as the people of Sebastiyeh have gained an unenviable notoriety for their turbulence and incivility to strangers; we were therefore very agreeably surprised when they crowded round us, as we surveyed the ruins of the church, to find them perfectly civil. They held our horses, pointed out the tomb of Nebi Yehya, and offered a considerable collection of ancient coins for sale, most of which were copper. They proposed to conduct us into the mosque; but, as the tradition of the Baptist's body being brought over by his Jewish disciples from the castle of Machærus on the other side Jordan, where he was beheaded, and deposited in the country and in the ancient capital of the Samaritans, who bore a mortal antipathy to every Jew, was too transparent a falsehood to gain any credit, we declined the offer. Yet, though John the Baptist was probably never there, either living or dead, it was most interesting to recall upon the spot the joy which pervaded that city when the Gospel was preached in it by Philip the Evangelist, and how 'the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which he spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.'—Acts viii. 6, 8.

After having purchased some coins, and satisfied the expectations of the men who had held our horses, we made the circuit of the hill, beginning on the southern side. At the eastern end of the hill, about a couple of hundred yards to the south of the modern village, there are ruins of what most probably was the temple built by Herod in honour of Augustus; and from this ruin a double row of pillars extends all the way along the hill-side to its western face, where it ends at what has evidently been one of the gates of the city. About sixty of these columns are still standing; many more have fallen, and now lie on the ground; while others have been broken over, and the stumps alone remain. The magnificence of this entrance to the temple reminds one in a small degree of those avenues of pillars by which the temples of Egypt were approached. The olive and fig trees grow so thickly

around, that though we had this side of the hill in view while descending the mountain above Nakúrah, these pillars were quite hidden from observation. From the western side of the hill, we had a fine view of the magnificent situation of the ancient Samaria. The hills all around are much higher than the one on which we stood; and a chain of castles erected upon them might have preserved the city from surprise on every side but the west, where, to an invading army, approach must always have been easy along the wide valley, which extends for some miles below the hill, and then falls into that of Nablous, which there makes a very considerable bend to the north-west. The villages of Nakúrah on the south, of Beit Imrín on the east, of Burka on the north, and of Ramín and Kefr el Labad to the north-west, are all visible from this point; as also the Mediterranean Sea in the distance to the west, near the place where the ancient Apollonia stood. In riding round the northern side of the hill, we observed, when we had nearly reached its eastern extremity again, two groups of pillars, one above the path, between the village and the summit, and the other considerably below it, which probably mark the sites of other temples that once existed there. The first of these has not more than half a dozen pillars standing; but the other has been a building of great magnificence, the oblong form of which is distinctly marked by a row of pillars all round, most of which are still erect, and which, by a rough calculation, we guessed to be between twenty and thirty in number. There are no ruins to be found within this pillared enclosure, the level surface of which seems now to be used by the inhabitants for a summer threshing-floor. We passed within about 150 feet of it as we descended towards the valley on the northern side of the hill. A more beautiful and luxuriant, as well as a more secure position, for the capital of his kingdom, Omri could not have selected, than the hill of Shemer. Whether regard be had to the thickly planted olive trees, or to the rich green sward which covers the basin through which we passed, both in approaching and leaving Sebastíyeh, it fully bears out to this day the prophet's description of it as 'the Fat Valley.'—Isaiah xxviii. 4.

After crossing a small stream in the bottom of the valley, we began to ascend hills of greater height than the hills of Judah, or those we had crossed in coming from Nablous, and which stretch away to the north and north-west till they end in Carmel. These are 'the mountains of Samaria,' which, from the mention made of them in Scripture, are familiar to us as household words. After half an hour's ride from Sebastíyeh, we arrived at the village of Burka, pret-



tily situated on the hill-side, within a quarter of an hour of the top. At the entrance of the village there was an encampment of gipsies, who, true to the *métier* of their tribes, were busy mending pots and pans. From the top of the hill we had a still more extensive view of the Mediterranean, reaching almost to the spot where once stood the proconsular Cæsarea, the scene of Paul's two years' imprisonment, and of his first appearance before kings and rulers for Christ's sake. A fine undulating plain, broken here and there by isolated *tells*, lay below us to the north, studded with many villages, and beyond it the range of Carmel. This last piece of intelligence, when communicated by one of the dragomen, I refused at first to believe, from a curious geographical error which had become almost an axiom in my mind that Carmel formed the western promontory of the hills of Nazareth, and the northern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon; instead of which it is the southern boundary of the plain, and the end of the western ridge of the hills of Samaria, or rather of that chain of hills which, beginning at Ghebel Tih in the Desert, stretches northward until it ends in two forks, of which the western is Carmel, and the eastern the hills of Gilboa. Under the impression just mentioned, I naturally expected to see the plain of Esdraelon intervening between us and Carmel; and I am not sure that I was perfectly cured of my incredulity till I got a view of the plain with its boundary mountains from the hills above Jenin. Descending the mountain, we turned towards the north-east, and at 11.35 passed through the village of Fendekómieh, the Arabic form of the Greek Pentacomia (Πεντακομία). Another half-hour brought us to a pretty village called Geba by our mûkharis, whom we met just below it, as our path here joined the direct road from Nablous. This is another Gibeah or Geba; but no mention is made of it in the Scriptures. Reland, quoting from Eusebius, mentions a town called Gaba, sixteen miles from Cæsarea, and not far distant from the great plain, which agrees tolerably well with the position of this village. Further reference will be made to it a little further on. It would seem to have belonged to the half tribe of Manasseh who were settled to the west of Jordan, though none of the places indicating the boundary between Manasseh and Ephraim have yet been identified so far as I am aware. In the description given of it, Joshua xvii. 7-9, there is mention made of 'Michmethah that lieth before Shechem,' as also of the river Kanah, En-tappuah, and Asher. Eusebius mentions a village of the name of Asher, which existed in his day, between Neapolis and Bethshan (Scythopolis); but if Asher were really a village, which the verse following the above passage in

Joshua would lead us to doubt, it must have been much nearer the sea, and would better agree with the present village of Arsúf (Apolonia), which Reland supposes to have been its situation.<sup>1</sup>

After passing Geba, the road lay to the north-east along a fine green wadi, in which the beautiful red anemone grew in great abundance. At the upper end of it, about a couple of miles distant, on the top of a hill which projects into the wadi so as nearly to close it in, stands the town of Sanúr, having all the appearance at a distance of a strong fortified place, though a nearer inspection shows that the walls are now of no great strength. When about half a mile distant from it in the valley, we were much surprised at coming upon a large cannon-ball lying rusting among the grass; presently we passed a second of similar dimensions, and many fragments of shells. A Christian who had travelled from Nablous in company with the múkharis, seeing our surprise, immediately volunteered an explanation. These balls had remained where we found them for twenty-four years, none of the people about having taken the trouble to remove them. In 1830, Abdallah Pasha, the Governor of Akka, aided by the Emir Beshir of Lebanon, besieged the Sheikh of Sanúr, who had risen in rebellion against the Turkish authority. Though guns had been brought up for the siege with great difficulty from Akka, he appears to have done little execution with them, as it took not less than nine months, according to our informant, to reduce the place. The Pasha wreaked his vengeance against the people of Sanúr by cutting down all their olive trees, and, with true Oriental indifference, they have never been planted again.

The country which lay to our left after we passed Fendekómieh has since become doubly interesting to me, owing to the valuable discoveries which M. Van de Velde made in it. One of the villages which we had in sight, but the names of which we could not learn, must have been Rameh, which he identifies with REMETH, one of the towns of the tribe of Issachar.—Joshua xix. 21. On the north side of the range of hills which bounds the Wadi Sanúr he discovered the ruins of a place called Dothan, which, from its vicinity to Shechem, and its being on the high road from Damascus and the east of Jordan to Egypt, is undoubtedly the place where Joseph was sold by his remorseless brethren to the Midianites, who were going thither from Gilead.—Gen. xxxvii. 12, 17, 28. It agrees fully with the description which Eusebius gives of Dothan, as being ‘twelve Roman miles north of Samaria.’<sup>2</sup> Though he did not visit Sanúr, yet from its vicinity to

<sup>1</sup> Reland. Palest., p. 596, *sub voce*, Asher.

<sup>2</sup> Reland. Palest., p. 742.

Dothan he suggests that it was the ancient Bethulia, where Judith slew the Assyrian general Holofernes, of which there seems a strong probability from the description given of its situation. In the book of Judith we are informed that Holofernes pitched his tent between Geba and Scythopolis (Bethshan), and his army is described as reaching in breadth 'from Dothaim even to Belmaim, and in length from Bethulia to Cyamon, which is over against Esdraelon.'—Judith chap. iii. 10, and vii. 3. After his death, the Assyrian host fled eastward towards Esdraelon, and were followed and slaughtered as far as Chobai (Judith xv. 5.), which still is easily recognised in the modern Kubatíyeh, a village a few miles farther on the road to Jenin. There are therefore three localities in the neighbourhood which are known to have been in the vicinity of Bethulia, viz., Geba on the west, Kubatíyeh on the north-east, and Dothan on the north. I have only to add to these arguments in favour of identifying Sanúr with Bethulia, that in descending into the Merj el Ghurúk from the hill on which the town stands, we observed a fountain at its base, by the side of which we at first proposed to halt for lunch, which would exactly agree with 'the fountain of water which issueth forth of the foot of the mountain, from whence all the inhabitants of Bethulia have their water' (Judith vii. 12, 13), that was guarded by the Edomites and Moabites, so as to cut off supplies from the town. From the time of the Crusaders both Dothan and Bethulia have been supposed to be situated in Galilee, though Eusebius distinctly places the former within a short distance of Samaria; and to Van de Velde belongs the honour of bringing their true situation to light.

Unconscious at the time of any interest attaching to it, we left Sanúr a few paces to the right, without entering its walls, and immediately descended into an extensive plain, or more properly speaking a morass, called Merj el Ghurúk ('The Meadow of Drowning'). The name is most appropriate. While our baggage animals made a circuit to the left along the base of the hills, our dragoman persuaded us to take the path which intersects the Merj diagonally, and we soon found to our cost that our poor animals sunk in water and mud up to the saddle-girths at every step. With our feet immersed in water, we had three miles at least of this dreadful floundering, and expected every moment that the horses would stick fast from sheer exhaustion, so great was the effort required to drag their feet out of the mud. In summer the Merj is dry enough. The water through which we waded was all surface water, produced by the late rains, and retained there by the aluminous nature of the soil. Many storks were fishing among

the long rank reeds and tufts of grass on either side of the road. It took us an hour to wade through this Slough of Despond, and having at last arrived at its eastern end, we halted for half an hour at 1.30 under some fine old olives trees for lunch, and to rest our weary animals. The hills to our left were dotted with clumps of brushwood, from the midst of which, while we were stretched among the wild flowers, two brown bears emerged, and made off up the hill as fast as their ungainly limbs would carry them. The only gun which the party could boast of was immediately put in requisition; but the Messrs Bruin had got too good a start before they were perceived to suffer any damage from its contents.

Leaving the Merj el Ghurük, our path ascended a rocky pass to the north, from the summit of which the plain of Esdraelon and the hills of Galilee first burst upon our view, Ghebel Duhî, or the Little Hermon, being most prominent among the latter; and as we descended on the other side the landscape became wider, embracing the range of Carmel towards the west. The *coup d'œil* was most magnificent, as the plain is nearly twenty miles in breadth, and the hills on the other side seemed to rise like an immense wall, impeding all progress. At two o'clock we entered the village of Kubatiyeh (probably Chobai), in which we observed some cuttings in the rock, and other marks of an ancient site. The inhabitants have a bad character as robbers; but we received no molestation from them. Another hour's ride brought us to a new range of hills which overlook the plan of Esdraelon, and from which the view was still grander and more extensive. To the east and north-east were the mountains of Gilboa, at two or three hours distance; far away in the north-east the snow-capped Hermon was a most conspicuous object; and all my doubts about Carmel were removed, as I traced the range till it bends west within a few miles of Khaifa. At four o'clock we had descended by a mountain pass from the hills, and pitched our tents within the borders of the tribe of Issachar, by the side of the little town of Jenin, the ancient ENGANNIM, belonging to that tribe (Joshua xix. 21), and the Ginaea and Geman of Josephus.<sup>1</sup> It is beautifully situated on the very edge of the great plain, on a projecting spur of the hills of Samaria, from among which we had just emerged. It is blessed with a copious stream of running water, which, after supplying the wants of the town, is carried by a low aqueduct to some gardens outside, well stocked with fruit trees, in which the dark green leaves of the orange and lemon contrasted very pleasantly

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. xx. 6, compared with Bel. Jud. Lib. ii. 12.

with the bare and leafless branches of the fig and the pomegranate. We could discover no traces of ruins in the town or its neighbourhood. The Bazaar is small and mean; but in passing through it our eyes fell on a basket of fresh fish, which, as a novelty we had not met with for many a day, we recommended the owner to take straightway to our tents. They were carp from the Lake of Tiberias, and a most dainty addition they proved to our frugal meal.

While the tent-pitching and culinary operations were going on, we ascended a small eminence opposite the town, at the bottom of which we had halted, and were speedily joined by several of the elders of Jenin. The younger Mr Fletcher, who draws beautifully, made a sketch of the town, with the mountains of Gilboa in the distance; and meanwhile I plied the townsmen with questions respecting the names of villages in sight.

On the eastern or upper side of the plain, which now bears the name of Merj Ibn Amer, there is a range of hills running from north towards the south-east, to which they gave the names of Ghebel Fukúa and Ghebel Jilbún. These are the hills of Gilboa, on which Saul and Jonathan fell by the hands of the Philistines, and which David apostrophises in the well known words: 'Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil.'—2 Sam. i. 21. They have a bare and desolate appearance, which in former days was supposed to be the result of David's curse. Brocardus the monk thinks it necessary to refute this opinion from his own observation.<sup>1</sup> A branch of the plain extends to the south-east, between the mountains of Gilboa and those of Samaria, at the foot of which Jenin is situated. The village of Jilbún was not in sight; but on the sides of the hills which derive their name from it, we saw the villages of Fukúa, Araneh, Arabúnah, and Masara. The direction of Zerín, the ancient Jezreel, which once gave its name to the whole plain, was also pointed out to us. To the north the plain was bounded by Ghebel Duhi (Little Hermon), which completely intercepts the view of Tabor; and to the north-west, by the hills of Nazareth; to the south and south-west, the nearest point being a couple of hours distant, were the hills of Samaria, ending in the range of Mount Carmel. On their slopes the following villages were pointed out to us: Kefr Dan, Jamún, Sileh,

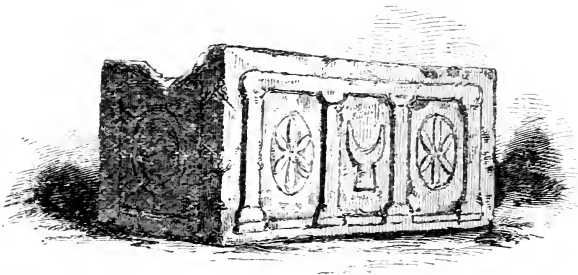
<sup>1</sup> Nec est verum, ut quidam putant, neque rorem neque pluviam descendere super montes Gilboë; quum, in memetipso A.D. 1283. et pluviam et rorem in illo monte sim expertus.—Brocardi Locorum Terr. Sanct. Descriptio, Ed. Bonfrerii.

Táanúk, and El Lejjun. The two last are associated with one of the memorable battles fought in this plain so early as the time of the Judges of Israel. In the name Táanúk, the Taanach of Scripture remains almost unchanged; and in El Lejjun (Legio of the Romans) Dr Robinson has recognised, with every degree of probability, the ancient Megiddo, where the Israelites, under Deborah and Barak, fought against Sisera, the general of Jabin, king of Hazor, near the sources of the Jordan.—Judges v. 19. The immense plain naturally suggests itself as the most fitting place in all the land of Palestine for the manœuvres of contending armies; and history, both sacred and profane, informs us that it has been abundantly used for deeds of war. Here we find Deborah and Barak fighting against the Canaanites. At Shunem, now marked by the village of Súlam at the foot of Ghebel Duhí, the Philistines gathered to battle against Saul, while he pitched his tents in it also, near the fountain of Jezreel, at the base of the hills of Gilboa.<sup>1</sup>—1 Sam. xxviii. 4, and xxix. 1. In the Valley of Megiddo the good king Josiah, faithful to his allegiance to the king of Assyria, went forth to oppose the progress of Pharaoh Necho, king of Egypt, and was slain, while his army was defeated.—2 Chron. xxxv. 22, 23. On this plain, in later times, the Saracens and Crusaders have more than once measured weapons; and on it, in 1799, one of Napoleon's famous battles was fought against the Turks. The men of Jenin told us that he was encamped by the side of their town in the morning, where he left his tents standing when he went to Kleber's assistance; that he dined in Nazareth, and slept in Acre.

*March 23.*—We left Jenin at seven o'clock on our way to Nazareth, and proceeded across the plain a little to the west of north, having the mountain of Precipitation, as it is called, directly before us. An hour after leaving we were abreast of the village of Mukéibleh, which is about three minutes to the right of the path; and at this point, bidding farewell to one of our companions who was hastening to Beyrout to catch the Austrian steamer, the Messrs Smith and I, attended by Shaheen, turned off the direct road, as we had resolved to visit Zerín and Súlam by the way. The village was better built than most of those which we had seen farther south; but, with the exception of a few fragments of broken pillars, there was nothing to denote great antiquity. We were detained about a quarter of an hour in it, endeavouring to find a guide to conduct us to Zerín, which we saw at a

<sup>1</sup> Aphek must have been in the immediate neighbourhood of Shunem, perhaps occupying the site of one of the neighbouring ruined villages of Fuleh or Afuleh.

distance. The villagers seemed all unwilling to accompany us; but one at length consented, on the condition that we should pay him the stipulated sum before setting out, which we were fain to do, as no alternative presented itself. Leaving the village, we rode directly east towards the foot of the hills of Gilboa, and at five minutes distance from the village, came upon two ancient and beautifully carved sarcophagi, the lids of which, in shape like a pent roof, lay beside them on the ground. The annexed wood-cut is taken from a drawing which I made on the spot. The length of these sarcophagi was seven feet and a half, the breadth outside five feet, the depth three feet and a half outside, and two feet and a half within. The thick-



ness of the sides was six inches, and the bottom was slightly raised at the end where the head reposed. The north side of each (they now lie east and west) was perfectly plain, probably from its being intended to rest against the wall of the tomb, while the south side was divided by pilasters into three compartments. The middle one contained a crescent resting on a pedestal,<sup>1</sup> the ancient symbol of Astarte or Ashtaroth, and each of the side compartments contained a star. While one side of each sarcophagus was ornamented by the symbols just described, the devices on the ends of both were different. At the ends where the head had lain, in one there was sculptured the winged globe so common in Assyrian and Egyptian monuments, and on the other the sun; at the other end, in both, the devices were simply ornamental. Later in the day, near the entrance to Zerim, we passed other sarcophagi similar in size and form, but none bearing devices in any degree resembling these; and it struck me as not improbable,

<sup>1</sup> This figure may be a bull's head and horns, which was also a symbol of Astarte; for Sanconiatho declares, 'Astarte put on her head, as a mark of her sovereignty, a bull's head.' Cory's Fragments, pp. 6, 14, as quoted by Wilson. Lands of Bible, vol. vi., p. 223.

that they may have been the last receptacles for some of the priests of Baal and Ashtaroth, who basked in royal favour while the wicked Ahab and Jezebel held court at Jezreel. As there were no rocks abounding with tombs in the neighbourhood, we questioned our guide where they were found, when he pointed back to the village we had just left. 'Was there a tomb there?' we inquired. '*Nam, Nam!*' (yes, yes), was the immediate reply. We turned back at once to examine it, and found a long underground chamber excavated in the limestone rock, resembling on a Lilliputian scale the catacombs at Rome, into which we descended through a hole in the roof. It was quite empty; but our guide pointed out the places in which the sarcophagi are supposed to have stood, though he could give us no idea of the period when they were removed. One thing is certain, this removal was not the work of the present race of Arabs.

About a quarter of an hour or twenty minutes from Mukeibleh, we came to an eminence where there are various traces of ancient workmanship, although it bears no distinctive name that our guide knew. One of these possessed for us all the interest of a new discovery, as we had seen nothing of the kind before. It was a wine-press cut out of the solid rock. There was first a shallow trough eight feet square by one foot, or one foot and a half, in depth, in which the grapes were trodden out; and to the north of it there was a deep vat also hewn out of the rock, into which the must was conveyed, through a channel still entire, to undergo the process of fermentation. The *tell* on which it stands may probably have been such a vineyard as the Prophet Isaiah describes: 'My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also hewed<sup>1</sup> a wine-press therein.'—Isaiah v. 2. Living far from access to most modern books of travel in Palestine, I am not aware whether the sarcophagi and wine-press in the neighbourhood of Mukeibleh have been already brought before the notice of the public, or whether it is my good fortune first to direct attention to them; but they lie so near the traveller's path, even if journeying by the nearest way, to Nazareth, that, when once known, it will be inexcusable in any one to pass them without a visit. They are not noticed in any of the books I had with me. Half an hour more brought us to the ruins of a village called Sandéla. It is now entirely deserted; but a large Birket, and many wells cut deep in the rock, testify that this was the

<sup>1</sup> *hewed*, to cut out, especially in stone.



site of an ancient town of the tribe of Issachar, though among those specified in Joshua there is none that bears the least resemblance to the modern name. Among the ruins, I observed the upper millstone of a hand-mill made of black lava. As we approached this village we met the Mudir of Jenin, escorted by a body of soldiers, on his way to Zerín, who politely stopped to ask if we had lost our way and required assistance. At the same time he began scolding our guide for taking us over such rough ground instead of keeping the beaten road. We told him that the guide was acting under our direction, as we wished to visit the ruins on the hill-side, after which we intended to follow him to Zerín. After leaving Sandéla, as there was a tolerable road over a fine flat plain, we set off at a gallop, calling our guide to follow us, as we intended to rein in after we had breathed our horses. Mercury, however, had got his backslish in his pocket, and saw no use in distressing himself to make up to us; so without ceremony he turned on his heel, and when we looked about for him a few minutes afterwards he was well on his way to his native village. Except for the names of some of the hills and villages around we did not miss him greatly, as Zerín lay straight before us, and in half an hour we entered its precincts, passing a number of sarcophagi lying a little off the road-side to the left.

In approaching Zerín you imagine it is built in the middle of a flat level district; and therefore, on entering its narrow dirty street, the surprise is great to find that it stands upon the edge of a high bank facing the north, while there is a depression of from 200 to 300 feet in that part of the plain of Esdraelon lying below it. This makes the situation a commanding one in point of prospect; but as the heat must have been overpowering in summer, it is difficult to conceive why Ahab should have chosen this as his favourite residence. Jezreel now consists of little more than a score of flat-roofed huts, grouped round a ruined tower of solid masonry, but which does not seem to reach back to Israelitish times. There are no vineyards in the neighbourhood now; but as we descended towards the plain from the brow on which the village is situated, there were many spots well fitted for the purpose, one of which might probably have been poor Naboth's vineyard, where the rough-clad prophet met Ahab as he took possession of his blood-stained property.—1 Kings xxi. 20. Eusebius and Jerome place Esdraelon between Legio (Lejjun) and Scythopolis (Beisan), which exactly corresponds with the situation of this village; and since the time of the Crusades, it has been more or less continuously recognised as the Jezreel of Scripture. From the height on which the village stands we observed the village of Súlam opposite us at the

foot of little Hermon, Kúniah a little farther to the east, and Beisan on a hill apparently about three hours distance in the direction of the Jordan. This is the ancient Bethshan, where the headless bodies of Saul and his sons were fastened to the wall by the Philistines, and from whence they were rescued by the inhabitants of Jabesh Gilead in gratitude for the deliverance that monarch had brought them from the Ammonites, when he first drew his sword as king of Israel.—Compare 1 Sam. xxxi. 10, 11, with chap. xi. It was afterwards one of the cities of the Decapolis, and the only one situated on the west of Jordan. In the plain at the foot of the ridge on which Zerin is situated, we came to a fountain, or rather collection of springs, called Ain el Míteh, which issue from its base, just where the trap-rock crops out underneath the limestone. As no advantage is taken of it for irrigating the ground in the neighbourhood, it has formed a large swamp, bearing a most luxuriant crop of the plantain and iris. The northern extremity of the hills of Gilboa was about a couple of miles distant, and appeared from its dark colour to be entirely of trap formation. At its base there is another and much larger fountain called Ain Jelúd, from which a stream of water descends towards the Jordan. We could make out its course for a considerable distance from where it issues out of the rock by the bright green fringe on either side of it. Though a little farther distant than Ain el Míteh, it is probable that this was ‘the fountain of Jezreel,’ beside which Saul encamped the night before the disastrous battle on Gilboa. From the position of little Hermon (Ghebel Duhí), and the situation of Endor at its north-eastern base (as I afterwards ascertained from the top of Tabor), I was able to trace the course which that unhappy monarch must have taken when he went by night to consult the witch of Endor. From the fountain of Jelúd, a straight line drawn along the eastern base of little Hermon would almost touch that village. It cannot certainly be more than three hours’ ride, so that Saul had ample time to go thither and return before the dawn began to break; but weary with his journey, and utterly disheartened and crushed by the result of it, never did warrior hazard battle under more unfavourable circumstances.—1 Samuel xxviii.

As we had no guide with us, and no path was visible from the side of the springs of El Míteh, we made a dash across the plain in a straight line towards Súlam. The ride was a toilsome one, owing to chasms formed in the ground by the winter torrents, which we had to cross, and to the light friable soil in which our horses often sunk above the fetlocks. Many small patches of land were sown with corn, and

at intervals we saw a fellah ploughing with oxen, or with an ox and a donkey in the same yoke, one hand holding the plough and the other the long ox-goad; but on a rough calculation, nearly one-half of that vast plain, with a soil capable of prodigious vegetation, is waste and desolate; and nowhere during the course of my travels in Palestine was I so much struck as here with the manifest fulfilment of prophecy—‘Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, and ye be in your enemies’ land; even then shall the land rest, and enjoy her Sabbaths.’—Levit. xxvi. 34. There was a very abundant crop of wild artichokes, some of the variegated leaves of which measured three feet in length, affording convincing evidence of what the land is capable of bringing forth. There were also abundance of withered thistles, three and four feet in height, the growth of the previous year; but beyond these, there was little or no spontaneous vegetation in the centre of the plain. In an hour and a half from the time of leaving El Míteh we entered Súlam, a dirty miserable village, in approaching which we had to wade through a sea of liquid mud, fenced in on either side by a cactus hedge. The only novelty we remarked was the extraordinary number of beehives which the place possessed. They are little domed cottages, built of mud, and two or three seemed to be attached to each dwelling. It was the first intimation we had that we were in the land which once flowed with milk and honey. Súlam has long been recognised as the ancient SHUNEM, which belonged to Issachar, the natal place of Abishag.—Josh. xix. 18; 1 Kings i. 3. Around it the Philistines were encamped before the battle of Gilboa; and here dwelt the pious pair who made a chamber for the prophet on the wall of their house, that Elisha might find undisturbed quarters when he passed by. In the fields around it their child was struck down at wheat harvest by what must have been a *coup de soleil*; and here, in answer to the prophet’s wrestling prayer, the child was restored to life and to his mother.—1 Sam. xxviii. 4; 2 Kings iv. 8, 18, etc. From Súlam we rode for a time directly west along the base of Ghebel Dúhi, on the top of which there is a Mohammedan weli that has given to the mountain its present name. The ruined villages of Fuleh and Afuleh, near which the battle of Tabor was fought by Napoleon, were in view in the plain before us to the left; and between our path and them the undulating country was perfectly blue for the space of a mile with wild lupins in full bloom. There were other patches of bright red from the flowers of the beautiful anemone, which had been our constant companion since leaving Nablous, but was growing here in greater profusion than in any former part of our journey. The

graceful little red flower called Pheasant's Eye was also very abundant. All my inquiries regarding the lily, which our Lord preferred to Solomon in all his glory, proved fruitless. The oldest British and American residents were unable to fix on any one particular flower as clearly answering our Lord's description. About two o'clock we had got beyond the western extremity of Ghebel Dúhi, and a new scene opened up to the right. A large broad plain—a branch of Esdraelon—runs up between it and the hills of Nazareth towards the north-east, in which an isolated hill, considerably higher than those of Nazareth, but in the same range with them, at once attracted our attention: it was Mount Tabor. In form it resembles a truncated cone, and the side then fronting us was quite destitute of wood, which I had not expected. There were two villages near the base of the northern hills; one at the western extremity of Tabor, called Debúriyeh, and the other of larger dimensions a little farther to the south-west, which bears the name of Iksál. Both of these have been identified as border towns mentioned in Joshua's list, on the frontier of Issachar and Zebulun: the former as Daberath belonging to Zebulun, the latter as Chisloth Tabor, or Chesulloth, belonging to Issachar.—Joshua xix. 12, 18. The latter is mentioned also by Josephus under the name of 'Haloth in the great plain,' as the southern boundary of Lower Galilee.<sup>1</sup>

Supposing that the way to Nazareth passed by this village of Iksál, we turned out of the right path and followed one which led to a village about two miles distant, on the northern slope of Little Hermon, where we resolved to ask the way. When still a quarter of an hour from it we met a shepherd tending a few goats, from whom we asked the name of the village. Our surprise and emotion were great when he replied, Nain. Could that poor little miserable village before us indeed be the modern representative of the city of Nain? In the immediate neighbourhood of where we then were the Lord Jesus had wrought one of His most notable miracles, in raising from the dead the poor widow's son—a miracle by which His sympathy with human sorrow was most strikingly displayed, and the record of which has inspired many a stricken heart to draw near with boldness to the throne of grace. I felt as if the spot on which we stood was holy ground. A single incident such as this connected with a place that has no other claims to celebrity, makes on me a much deeper impression than Jerusalem, where incidents of history, sacred and profane,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. iii. 3.

overpower one at every turn. The modern village was too miserable, however, to invite a nearer inspection, as we learned from the shepherd that we had left the road to Nazareth where we turned to the right, and that we must retrace our steps. Pointing to the wall of hills some miles to the west, he told us that we must ascend it before we could reach Nazareth. The day was now well advanced, and we set off at a brisk pace to regain the path we had left. Riding however along the plain required some caution, as there were many deep holes, not larger than a horse's hoof, in the path, caused as we were told by the burrowing of some animal, to which they could give no name. Owing to the rapid rate at which we rode, I had failed to observe one of these in the path, when suddenly my horse was thrown to the ground by one of his fore legs sinking up to the knee in a hole, and by the impetus I was pitched over his head flat on the path. Luckily I sustained no greater injury than a severe bruise on the knee from my horse rolling over and then tramping on it in the effort to regain his feet; but I had made a narrow escape, for which I felt grateful to a kind Providence, for I had a couple of loaded pistols in my girdle, and thrown as I was flat on my face, it was a miracle that they were not discharged by the concussion, in which case my chance of life would have been the smallest.

The Mountain of Precipitation, from which, according to monkish tradition, the people of Nazareth attempted to cast down Jesus, was now a very prominent object, towering with its naked rugged cliffs considerably above the other hills in the chain. As we approached their base we became aware that the great caravan road from Damascus to Akka, which crosses the Jordan at the ford below the lake of Tiberias, lay between us and them, as we saw a string of twenty camels, laden with merchandise, pursuing their solemn course along it towards the west. The hills of Nazareth are nearly 1000 feet above the plain, and the ascent through a ravine in them was a formidable affair, as the path was rough and exceedingly steep. After mounting for about three quarters of an hour, we found ourselves in a small fertile basin, well covered with olive trees, at the northern extremity of which lies the town of Nazareth. It is larger than Jenin, and has, at a distance, a cleanly and imposing appearance; but the illusion is dissipated the moment one sets foot in the streets, which are perfect quagmires of filth and mud. Had it been as miserable as Jericho, however (the most wretched village I saw between Beersheba and Beyrout), it would still have been intensely interesting as the place where, in childhood, in boyhood, and

in early manhood, Jesus had lived for thirty years. There was not a hill around but His blessed feet must have trod it—not a valley or fountain, but it must have been visited by Him. In no other place was His presence so long manifested. Who can visit Nazareth, without calling to remembrance the brief history of His childhood?—‘He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.’—Luke ii. 52. The nearest and most prominent building, as we approached, was the Latin Convent and Church; but as we had no intention of taking up our abode with the monks, we passed through the town to a plot of ground on the north of it, beside the fountain of the Virgin, where our tents were already pitched, awaiting our arrival. It was about four o’clock when we dismounted, after an interesting ride of nine hours; eight of which had been through the fertile possessions of the tribe of Issachar.

Our first visit was to Mr Fletcher, whom we found comfortably installed in the Casa Nuova, a lodging-house erected by the Latin Convent for the reception of travellers, possessing a *Livre des Etrangers*, which serves as a safety-valve to prevent bilious gentlemen and irate ladies from exploding under the pressure of their individual grievances. From thence we visited the convent on the opposite side of the street, and found the monks performing vespers in the Church of the Annunciation. It is a small but pretty church, rather too gaudily dressed with crimson hangings. The high altar is approached by a flight of steps; and according to the information of the *frate*, who was our cicerone, occupies the place on which once stood the Santa Casa di Loretto, ere angels transported it over flood and field to place it under the guardianship of God’s Vicar upon earth, the Pope of Rome. What a libel upon Mary’s pretended power, that she was unable to defend her own house from infidel sacrilege in the town of Nazareth, and must needs call in the aid of the old lady who sits on the seven hills! Below the high altar a flight of steps leads down into a grotto, which we were informed was the place where the angel announced to the Virgin the high honour God had designed for her as the mother of the promised Messiah. In this grotto there is a broken pillar, the upper part of which is suspended from the roof, by miracle as they say, though it is not difficult to discern the hand of man in the contrivance.

After a visit to the Rev. Mr Klein, from whom I learned that the Tobin party had gone on to Beyrout a few days previously, we hastened to the hill above the town to get a good view of the surrounding country. On the summit there is a well dedicated to Nebi

Ismáel, whoever his saintship may be. From hence we saw Acre and the Mediterranean to the north-west, and Carmel and Khaifa to the south-west, a pile of hills interrupting a continuous view of the plain of Akka and the sea-coast between. To the south we had a splendid view of the hills of Nazareth, and of the great plain beyond them; of Tabor, little Hermon, Nain, Endor, Jenin, and the hills of Samaria, from the base of which we had started in the morning. When it is mentioned that the Mount of Precipitation is at least two miles distant from the town at the southern end of the wadi or basin, through which we rode on arriving, the reader may judge for himself whether any one with the Bible in his hand, is likely to accept the absurd tradition connected with it. On our way up we had visited the precipice in the hill behind the Maronite church, which, there can be little doubt, was the real scene of that wicked attempt made by the Nazarenes on the life of Jesus. To the north, on a range of hills at the farther side of a broad valley called Wadi el Buttáuf, there was pointed out to us the village of Sefuriyeh, the Sepphoris of Josephus, and Diocæsarea of the Romans, one of the strongest fortified cities which they had in Galilee.<sup>1</sup> In later days it was celebrated as the *rendezvous* of the Crusaders before the battle of Hattin, where they were defeated by Saladin the Great, and the fate of Palestine decided. A friend of Mr Klein's, who accompanied us, also pointed out the ruins of Kana el Jelil more to the east, but the growing shade on the hills made it difficult to distinguish them. To this place Dr Robinson first called attention, in the present century, as the Cana of Galilee, where our Lord turned the water into wine at the marriage feast (John ii.), instead of Kefr Kenna, on the way to Tiberias, which the monks point out as the scene of that event. With the name still unchanged, it seems strange that any rival should have disputed its claims. I visited the Greek church beyond the Fountain of the Virgin after descending to the tents, as I had resolved to satisfy myself with the distant view of Carmel and Akka from the Hill of Nazareth, and to make my way from Tiberias by Safed across the country to Tyre; but as that plan was afterwards abandoned, I had more ample opportunity of becoming acquainted with Nazareth on my return.

*28th March.*—We left Nazareth at eight o'clock for Tiberias, having resolved to ascend Ghebel Túr (Mount Tabor) by the way. Mr Klein had kindly made some inquiries whether it would be

<sup>1</sup> After the destruction of Jerusalem, the great Jewish Sanhedrim is said to have been established here many years before it was removed to Tiberias.

safe for us to do so, as there is a robber-chief who has his headquarters on the mountain; and had come to the conclusion that there would be no danger in making the attempt, as this Arab Dick Turpin had been in Nazareth a day or two before,—a sure sign that, for the moment, he was on friendly terms with the authorities. Passing the fountain of the Virgin, beside which the Greek church is built, we ascended the hills towards the east, and arrived at the foot of Tabor in an hour and a quarter, having passed through some woodland scenery which strongly reminded us of England. We met in the course of our ride with a species of iris I had never seen before, the flower of which was of a tawny green colour; and the whole country was carpeted with bright and beautiful anemones and tulips. A noble grove of trees composed of the ilex and the Turkish oak (*Quercus Aegilops*) extends a considerable way up the wadi which separates Tabor from the other hills of Galilee to the north. On its western and northern sides the mountain is covered with trees to the very top. The village of Debúriyeh we left below us to the right, and began to ascend the mountain by a zigzag path on the north, under the guidance of a Christian of Nazareth, whom the monks had provided as guide for Mr Fletcher. We met with no other obstacle to our ascent, than that which the steep path and the thick-tangled branches of the trees presented; and in an hour and a quarter from the base we stood on the summit of Tabor,—two hours and a half from the time we left Nazareth. The summit presents to view a flat platform about 3000 paces in circumference, strewed with extensive ruins. Round its outer verge there are the foundations of a wall which once evidently encircled the top, and must have rendered it a place of great security against the modes of attack practised in ancient warfare. I was not prepared to find either so extensive a platform, or such an amount of ruins on the top of this mountain. Monkish tradition has long pointed to Tabor as ‘the mountain apart,’ which was the scene of our Lord’s transfiguration; and with such unquestioning credulity has it been received, that even Protestant preachers and divines are generally in the habit of associating Tabor with the transfiguration. Dr Robinson has therefore rendered a great service to all those who prefer truth to tradition, by pointing out, from historical evidence, the absolute *impossibility* of its having been the scene of that wonderful event. That evidence may be summed up in a few words. Tabor was crowned with a city, at the earliest mention made of it in Scripture history, viz., when Joshua made division of the conquered land of Canaan; for among the cities which were then assigned



to the Levites for their residence, we find Tabor and her suburbs selected from the tribe of Zebulun.—1 Chron. vi. 77. That the top of Tabor, instead of being a solitude, was, on the contrary, a thickly peopled town from that time forward, is a matter of the highest probability. Polybius, the historian, states, that ‘Antiochus the Great ascended Mount Atabyrion or Itabyrion (the Greek form of the name), and got possession of the city and fortified it, 218 years B.C.’ Josephus, the Jewish historian priest and general, relates, that he surrounded the whole of the summit of Tabor with a wall of defence (*i.e.* repaired it) in the days of Vespasian, about thirty years after the transfiguration took place; and an attentive perusal of his account of a battle, fought there by Placidus, will show that, besides strangers from other parts of the country who came to defend the fortified hill, there was a town on it which had its own inhabitants.<sup>1</sup> Thus Tabor having had a city upon it from the time of the entrance of the Israelites, which was fortified 218 years before Christ’s appearance, and put again in a state of defence thirty years after His ascension, most certainly could not be ‘the high mountain apart’ (Mark ix. 2), where the representatives of the church militant, and of the church triumphant, met around their glorified Redeemer, and where ‘Moses and Elias spake with Him of his decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.’ Considering that Jesus came from Capernaum at the time, the high, isolated, double-peaked mountain, called Kúrún Hattin, which we saw from the top of Tabor, overhanging the descent to the Lake of Tiberias, seemed a much more likely place; but among the desert hills of Galilee, which lay piled upon one another to the north, there were many which might well answer the description of the Mount of Transfiguration.

A beautiful grassy plateau extends along the northern side of the summit, hemmed in on the edge of the mountain by a thicket of trees, and on the south, by immense masses of ruin, which occupy the whole of the centre and southern side of the summit. Among these we observed two deep wells cut out of the rock; and our guide conducted us into a vault which is used as a chapel by the monks of Nazareth when they pay a visit to Tabor. A solitary gateway still stands on the southern side of the hill called Bab el Howá (the Gate of the Wind). We did not lose much time in the examination of the ruins, but hastened to the eastern extremity of the hill, where

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud., Lib. iv. cap. 1.

they rise to a height which enabled us to have a good view of the surrounding country. To the south, Ghebel Dúhi lay right opposite to us, with the villages of Endor and Nain on its northern slopes. To the east of it we again saw very distinctly Beisan, and the valley of the Jordan, with the mountains of Gilead and Bashan beyond.<sup>1</sup> To the north-east there lay before us in the plain, not many miles distant, Khan el Tujjar or Khan Suk, by which we were to pass in our route, and the village of Lubíyeh a little to the north of it. Beyond the Khan was the mountain called the Horns of Hattin; and on a high hill still farther to the north, the town of Safed, which is reckoned one of the holy places of the Jews in Palestine, and supposed to be that which our Lord had in view from the Mountain of Beatitudes, when He said to His disciples, 'a city set on a hill cannot be hid.' The upper part of the Lake of Tiberias was also visible; and beyond it, far to the south-east, the true Mount Hermon (Ghebel esh Sheikh). More to the eastward on the other side of the Lake of Tiberias, a high pyramidal hill rose from the plain called Tel el Furas, by which the guide informed us the road to Damascus passed. Other peaks we observed at a still greater distance, which were described by the same authority as belonging to the Ghebel Haurán; but I doubt whether that chain can be seen from so great a distance. After descending from Tabor, our road for a while lay nearly east, and then north, during which we passed through woodland scenery of great beauty. The fine old oaks among which we rode, contrasted delightfully with the olive, the only tree commonly met with farther south. I had expected, in riding through the thickets, that we should probably have started some sort of game, if not some beasts of prey; but there was nothing to be seen. The Messrs Fletcher, when half-way across the Plain of Esdraelon on the previous day, had come suddenly on a flock of gazelles, but they bounded off with such rapidity as to be beyond gun-shot in a moment. That was the only time any of our party had seen a wild animal since leaving Jerusalem, with the exception of the two bears in the Merj el Ghurúk, though at night the jackals usually treated us to their discordant music. We were equally struck with the scarcity of birds. Between Súlam and Nain, two flights of storks had passed over our heads, each composed of many hundred birds, making the air resound with the noise of their

<sup>1</sup> To the east of Endor, Dr Wilson had pointed out to him a village called Kefr Musr, which I regret not having seen, as he supposes with great probability, that it is the MEROZ, so bitterly cursed in the Song of Deborah, Judges v. 23.

pinions; but of the smaller specimens of the feathered tribe, the butcher bird was the only one which we saw frequently.

At 12.50 we arrived at Khan el Tujjar, a building of very large dimensions now in ruins, opposite to which, on the other side of the wadi, there is a Saracenic fortress in an equally ruinous condition. This khan is more commonly called Khan es Súk, from a fair held beside it every week, to which the inhabitants of all the neighbouring towns and villages betake themselves. We halted under the shade of the spacious doorway for half-an-hour to refresh ourselves on what our saddle-bags could furnish by way of lunch, and to feed our horses. Our road after setting out again lay a little north of east, and for a time we rode over a plain of rich soil, large portions of which were uncultivated. Whole acres were covered with the wild artichoke which we had seen in the Plain of Esdraelon on the previous day, and the enormous size of the leaves struck us all with astonishment.

At 2.10 we passed the village of Kefr Sábt, on a slight eminence to the right hand; and from thence, the ground broke away on the south-east into a deep broad valley called Wadi Beisúm. Along the northern edge of this our path lay, while to the left we skirted the Plain of Hattin, in which the disastrous battle was fought in A.D. 1187, between the Crusaders and Sultan Saladin, from which the former never recovered. At 3.30 we were abreast of the mountain called Kúrún Hattín (the Horns of Hattin), from its double peaks resembling the horns of a buffalo. Tradition points to it as the Mountain of Beatitudes, on which our Lord delivered the discourse to His disciples known as the Sermon on the Mount.—Matt. v. vi. vii.<sup>1</sup> The town of Safed is situated on the side of a much higher hill to the north, and forms one of the most prominent features of the landscape; so that if this were really the mountain from which our Lord spake, nothing could be more striking than the similitude drawn from the city set so conspicuously on a hill. After passing Ghebel Kúrún Hattin, half-an-hour brought us to the edge of the deep basin in which lies the Lake of Tiberias, from whence there is a very steep descent to the

<sup>1</sup> Brocardus A.D. 1283 places the Mount of Beatitudes within a stone's throw of the Lake of Galilee, three leagues from Safed. *De castro Sephet per tres leucas in descensu montis, contra orientem ad jactum lapidis a mare Galiliæ est mons ille, in quo Christus fecit sermonem illam salutarem, etc.* In pede hujus montis paululum a mari, oritur fons vivus quem quidam somniunt venam esse Nili. Josephus vero appellat eum Capernaum. *Descrip. Loc. Terr. Sanc. Edi. Bonfrerii.*

town of Túbariyeh on its margin. The northern portion of the lake only was visible from this point; and high hills to our right, which seemed to rise almost from its brink, prevented us from forming any notion of its exact length. The steep hills of Bashan, better known as those of Gadara, rise perpendicularly from the water's edge on the other side, as the mountains of Moab do from the Dead Sea; and the deep gullies riven in their sides, forming funnels for the wind, at once explain how those sudden storms arise on the Sea of Galilee, by which our Lord and his disciples were more than once overtaken. As we looked down upon it from the heights it lay motionless and still, reflecting the mountains on its bosom. The scenery around is scarcely so bold as that of the Dead Sea, but still very lovely; and the fact that Jesus had sailed often on its bosom, had taught upon its shores, had rebuked its raging waves and howling winds, and had actually walked upon its waters, imparted to it an unspeakable interest. On that lake poor Peter made his rash attempt to walk to his Master; and on its shore he was reinstated in his forfeited apostleship, with the solemn injunction, 'Feed My sheep, Feed My lambs.' Yet with all the delight which visiting the scene of so many heart-moving events conveyed, it were concealing the truth, if I did not confess to a feeling of disappointment in finding the famed Sea of Galilee so insignificant in point of size. Even after its entire length became visible, this feeling was not removed, as it is not more than a dozen of miles in length by six in breadth. From the heights on which we stood before beginning the descent, there is a fine view of the head of the Lake and of the Valley of Jordan, where that river enters it; but the high hills to the east of Safed intercepted the view of the Bahr Húleh, (the Waters of Merom). Away to the north-east, there was a glorious view of Mount Hermon, and from thence eastward, of the tract of country anciently called Gaulanitis, and of Bashan. Our guide pointed out Khan Minyeh and Tell Hum on the northern shore, both of which have been supposed to be Capernaum, the town where Jesus chiefly resided during His public ministry on earth, and where most of His mighty works were done. Dr Robinson gives the weight of his name to the former; but the very uncertainty in which its identification is still involved, is a striking fulfilment of the Lord's prediction, 'And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven shalt be brought down to hell.'—Matt. xi. 23. All that can be certainly gathered regarding it is, that it was on the western side of the Jordan, as Josephus mentions having been carried there in a disabled state when making an attack on Julius, and thence forwarded to Tarichea, at the foot

of the Lake.<sup>1</sup> The towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida, against which Jesus denounced a woe on account of the unbelief of their inhabitants, have likewise hitherto baffled the researches of the ablest archæologists.<sup>2</sup> Along the western shore, probably about an hour and a half above Tubariyeh, the village of Migdel was pointed out to us in the Plain of Genezareth. It occupies the site of the Magdala of the New Testament, from whence Mary, out of whom seven devils had been cast, received the cognomen of Magdalene.

We arrived at Tubariyeh at five o'clock; but as the Messrs Smith and I had ordered our tents to be pitched at the Hot Springs about half an hour farther south, we did not enter the town. It was almost totally destroyed by the dreadful earthquake of 1837, and a more forlorn and wretched looking place it is scarcely possible to conceive. Large portions of its walls have been thrown down and remain unrepaired, while the miserable dens in which the inhabitants live, have been erected on the ruins of their overthrown dwellings. There is a ruined Saracenic castle on a small rising ground to the north of the town, and the place itself gives no evidence of a more ancient construction. The town which was built and named by Herod the Tetrarch of Galilee, in honour of his patron the Emperor Tiberius, lay more to the south; and, in riding along the shore we passed through very extensive ruins, some of which are now submerged in the lake. We noticed many granite pillars, and one ruin of larger dimensions than the rest, which possibly may mark the site of the Adrianium, a heathen temple begun by the Emperor Adrian, and afterwards converted into a Christian Church. It is supposed that long before Herod's day, one of the towns of the Canaanites, given after the conquest to the tribe of Naphtali, occupied the same site. Jerome places the town of Chinnereth there, but the Jewish Rabbis in their writings, with much more probability, identify it with Rakkath.—Joshua xix. 35.

<sup>1</sup> Vita Joseph. 72.

<sup>2</sup> I have been informed, by a private letter from Jerusalem, that, during the course of last year (1855), the Rev. Mr Thomson, of the American Mission at Sidon, discovered the ruins of Bethsaida on the eastern side of the lake.

## CHAPTER XII.

## TIBERIAS TO BEYROUT.

WE found our tents pitched on the shore of the lake, within a few yards of a handsome building erected in 1833 by Ibrahim Pasha as a public bath. Like everything else in this land belonging to the Turkish Government, it is now neglected and falling into a state of dilapidation. The doors have fallen from the hinges, and some of the marble baths in the private rooms are broken and useless. The principal apartment is a circular hall with a domed roof, supported by marble pillars, containing a circular tank about twenty feet in diameter and five feet deep. There are two small bath rooms to the back; but, when they were prepared for our use, we found the water so hot that it was impossible to use them, and betook ourselves to the great tank in the hall. Even there, when we immersed our feet preparatory to plunging in, the heat was unbearable, and I was obliged to make the faithful Hanna pour the water over me gradually for a quarter of an hour ere my skin was prepared to bear the heat. Jerusalem could not supply me with a thermometer in lieu of the one broken at the hot springs of Pharaoh, and I could consequently form no accurate estimate of the heat, but I have since found it stated by Robinson as 144° Fahr. Dr Wilson, coming from an Indian climate, was able to swim in it; the utmost I could do was to endure the immersion for a few seconds. There is a keeper attached to the establishment; but the usual accompaniments of a Turkish bath, viz., heated linen, coffee, and chibouks, are not supplied at the Húmmam Túbaríyeh. At a little distance from Ibrahim Pasha's bath there is the old one, which is still sometimes used; and the water is conveyed in pipes to the new one from the hot springs which are in the neighbourhood of the former. This was the place, according to Josephus, where Vespasian pitched his camp during the siege of Tarichea, for he tells us it was between Tiberias and Tarichea, at a place called Emmaus, 'which, if interpreted, may be rendered a warm-bath, for

therein is a spring of warm water ;<sup>1</sup> and here also there can be little doubt, from the signification of the name, stood the town of HAMMATH, belonging to the tribe of Naphtali.<sup>2</sup> There are ruins still seen a little to the south of the baths, but it is uncertain whether they may have belonged to the fortified camp of the Roman General or to the Jewish town. About an hour farther south the end of the lake is reached ; and on open ground to the west of it are the ruins of Tarichea, a town fortified by Josephus and taken by Titus, who slew most of its inhabitants, and sold the rest as slaves. The hills on the eastern side of the lake are those of Gadara, and one opposite Tiberias is pointed out as that over which the swine, possessed by the legion of devils, rushed down into the lake and were destroyed. The shore is strewn with immense quantities of shells, a small bagful of which I brought away with me, as also a bottle of water from the baths for analysis.<sup>3</sup> At midnight I was still strolling alone the shore, listening to the gentle wavelets as they broke upon the gravelly beach, and thinking of Him who, after a night spent in prayer on one of the mountains opposite, was taken by His disciples for a spirit, as He approached them walking on its waters at the gray and misty dawn. The bosom of the lake was like glass, and every star in the firmament above was reflected on its surface. I thought of Byron's simile borrowed from it for the pomp of the Assyrian host—

The sheen of their spears was like stars on the sea,  
When the blue wave rolls nightly on deep Galilee.

*March 25.*—After bathing in the lake, and watching for a while a fisherman of Galilee casting his bag-net from the shore, for there are neither ships nor boats now plying on its waters, we left the Húmmam Túbariyeh at 7.30 and rode up to the town, where Mr Fletcher had

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Bell. Jud. Lib. iii. cap. 10, and Lib. iv. cap. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Josh. xix. 35. A strip of land belonging to the tribe of Naphtali seems to have extended along the western bank of the Jordan till it marched with the tribe of Judah. 'The coast reacheth . . . to Judah upon Jordan towards the sunrising.' Verse 34.

<sup>3</sup> The result of Professor Gregory's analysis is as follows :—Specific gravity at 60° Fahr., 1022.5 ; amount of solid matter in the gallon, 282 grains, consisting of—

Chloride of Sodium . . . . .	76.85
Sulphate of Lime . . . . .	11.01
Sulphate of Magnesia . . . . .	12.14
	100.00

taken up his abode in an inn kept by a Jew. We met him a little below it coming in search of us, and learned that he had spent a sleepless night, having been nearly devoured by fleas. The walls of Túbariyeh are built of a black basaltic rock, which gives the town a sombre appearance, apart altogether from the ruin which it everywhere displays. Veins of this trap formation are seen intersecting the precipitous limestone hills, at the base of which the baths and the ruins of the ancient Tiberias are situated. We entered the town by a small postern gate at the south side, but were obliged to dismount in order to pass, as it is not more than six feet high, and then rode straight to the Synagogue of the Sephardim, a small room crowded to excess, the atmosphere of which was so fetid that we made a very short stay in it. As this is one of the holy cities, it was to be expected that a considerable number of Jews should be found in it; but I was surprised to find that they estimated their number at one thousand, as the place did not appear capable of holding a larger population; we were told, however, that the Mohammedan inhabitants numbered a thousand more, thus making a total of 2000 inhabitants. There are but one or two Christians to be found in the place.

The chief object I had in view in visiting the town was to procure a guide to accompany me to Safed, as my intention was, after visiting it and Banias, to strike across the lower Lebanon to Tyre, taking by the way the magnificent castle of the Crusaders, Belfort, now called Khalat el Shukif. I had already announced my intention to my friends, and arranged to join them again, if no unforeseen accident occurred, at Tyre, and had actually sent forward the múkhari with the baggage, when I entered the town. On applying, however, to the metzellim of Tiberias for a guide, a difficulty arose which I had not anticipated. He declared it was unsafe for a single traveller to journey by that road, as it was at present infested with robbers, and that I must have an escort of four soldiers. This of course involved a heavy expense for the payment of these guards, which I was not prepared to incur; and finding Mohammed Effendi obstinate in his refusal of a single guide, and my fellow-travellers urgent that I should keep by them, I abandoned my project with as much philosophy as one can command under such a disappointment, and sent forward Shaheen to recall the múkhari. I had looked forward with much satisfaction to exploring for myself Khan Minyeh, Tell Hum, and the Hazor of the Canaanitish Jabin, as well as visiting the Lake Merom and the sources of the Jordan; but all these I was now obliged to forego.

We set out once more for Nazareth by the same path we had fol-



lowed the day before. The heat in the valley was excessive, though the depression cannot be quite so great as that of the Ghor at the head of the Dead Sea, as the tropical plants and bushes of the southern Desert which grow there are wanting in the basin of Tiberias. As we approached the Kúrún es Hattin, the guide from Nazareth pointed out in the deep rocky Wadi el Hamam below us to the right the spot occupied by the ruins of Irbid, believed by Robinson to be the Arbela mentioned by Josephus, in the neighbourhood of which the fortified caves still exist, from which Herod expelled the robbers who frequented them.<sup>1</sup> These caves bear at this date the name of Khalat Ibn Ma'an, and a full description of them is given both by Burckhardt<sup>2</sup> and Robinson.<sup>3</sup> Instead of following the path to the Kefr Sabt and Tabor, we kept more to the north along the Wadi el Buttauf, and at half-past eleven passed the village of Lubíyeh to the left, a few minutes distant from the path in the midst of a grove of olive trees. Tradition marks this as the village in the vicinity of which Jesus met and healed the ten lepers.—Luke xvii. 12. Half an hour later we passed another village called Teráan on the right, and had the town of Sefúríyeh full in view about a couple of hours in front of us, but a projecting spur in the hills shut out Kana el Jelil. Beyond Teráan we began to shape our course more to the south-west, and ascending a low range of hills covered with natural wood, came into another wadi in which the village of Kefr Kenna is situated. The heat of the sun had been most oppressive all day; and after nine o'clock a hot sirocco wind began to blow, which caused such lassitude and feverishness that we were thankful to throw ourselves down to rest for a while under the shade of an olive tree in the court-yard of the Greek Church in the village. With its unplastered walls, naked rafters festooned with cobwebs, and clay floor, there was nothing to distinguish it from a barn, except an altar raised at one end of it. The buzzing noise of a school, and the domineering tones of the pedagogue, were heard proceeding from it; and on entering it, I was pleased to find about a score of urchins learning to read Arabic. It was a mystery how they saw to read, as there was no window in the building and the door was very low. So dark indeed was the place that, coming out of the strong glare of the sun, we could distinguish neither master nor scholars for some seconds. The children were squatted on the bare floor, while the dominie, as became his rank, was perched on the top of a

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. xii. cap. 11, and Lib. xiv. cap. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Burck. Travels, p. 331.

<sup>3</sup> Robinson's Bib. Res., vol. iii., p. 280.

tub turned on end. On the principle, I suppose, that 'the young idea may be taught to shoot' as successfully by observation of men and manners as by continued plodding at books, the children were speedily dismissed from school, that they might stare at the strangers while they fed. The priest, the schoolmaster, and about a score of villagers joined them in this profitable and mind-enlarging exercise.

This village is the one which monkish tradition points out as the Cana of Galilee, where the Lord turned water into wine at the marriage feast, and to afford indubitable evidence of it, two large earthenware water-pots, in size and shape exactly resembling the *coppi* now used for holding water in Italy, were shown us as the identical stone jars where the servants poured in water and drew forth wine. There is no stronger argument in favour of this being the Cana of the Gospel than that the name bears some resemblance, and that it is in the direct road which pilgrims take from Nazareth to Tiberias. The other Cana, however, is not only a village of Galilee, but actually bears unchanged to this day the name of Kana el Jelil. Since Robinson drew attention to the latter, the credit of Kefr Kenna has fallen very low. De Sauley, however, is chivalrous enough to break a lance in its favour; but his argument is one which a man familiar with his Bible would scarcely have ventured on. It simply amounts to this, that Jesus with His disciples and His mother were journeying on foot from Nazareth to Capernaum at the time this miracle occurred, and that consequently they never would have gone so far out of their way as Kana el Jelil.<sup>1</sup> The assumption that Jesus was on His way to Capernaum is not only gratuitous but contrary to the tenor of the Gospel narrative, which clearly indicates that the marriage took place in the house of a relative or friend of Mary's, and that she, as well as Jesus and His disciples, repaired to the village as bidden guests expressly to attend it.—John ii. 2. Few I apprehend will respond to the note of triumph with which the academician sums up this notable argument in favour of Kefr Kenna: 'This simple reasoning in my opinion completely destroys the whole of the seductive arguments of the learned Dr Robinson.' Robinson's arguments, though thus disposed of, seem unanswerable. Besides the existence of the name unchanged to the present day, he shows that earlier tradition pointed to Kana el Jelil as the place where the miracle was wrought, as exemplified by Marinus Sanutus in 1321, Breydenbach in 1483, Anselm in 1507, and Andrichomius at the close of the six-

teenth century.<sup>1</sup> He also shows that before Kefr Kenna can be accepted as the place, the word Kefr must be dropped, and the first radical in the Arabic changed and the doubling of the second omitted.<sup>2</sup> The village is remarkable only for the deep filth of its streets and for the quantity of its beehives, which, like those of Sülem, are little houses built with mud. A few hundred yards beyond the village to the south, there is a fine fountain of water, at which an ancient marble sarcophagus does duty as a drinking trough.

After leaving it we ascended a rough pass and turned our horses' heads nearly due south for Nazareth. On a lofty hill to the right of this pass is the village of El Meshhad, where the Moslems point out one of the tombs of the Prophet Jonah, and which is supposed to be GATH-SHEPHER, his native place. After leaving this two other hills had to be surmounted, in the valley between which we passed at 2.10 the village of Reineh to the right. Here there is another copious fountain, with an ancient sarcophagus for its trough, from which a goodly stream descends the valley. There is also a birket in the neighbourhood of the village, which marks it as the site of an ancient town. At length, weary and dispirited through the depressing effects of the *sirócco*, we reached our old camping-ground beside the Virgin's Fountain at Nazareth (En Násirah) at three o'clock, and found it partly occupied by two English officers just arrived from Jerusalem, one of whom was attired in a most extraordinary costume, consisting of fez, shooting-jacket, a pair of cotton drawers reaching to the knees, bare legs, and a pair of boots, vulgarly called *highlows*.

My first visit was to the Greek Church which stands behind the Virgin's Fountain at the foot of the hill we had descended. Service was being performed at the time, and the church was full to overflowing. One of the priests immediately came forward, and elbowing a way through the crowd, conducted us to a subterranean chapel, in which is the spring that supplies the Fountain of the Virgin. Our conductor gave us some of the water to drink, and informed us that the fountain sprang up miraculously on the spot where the Virgin knelt when the Angel Gabriel announced to her the blessed privilege which awaited her. Thus, according to the rival sects, each is in

<sup>1</sup> Kana el Jelil seems to have passed for Cana in the days of Brocardus, A.D. 1283, for he says:—Ab Acone, contra Eurum, iter dirigens, primo occurret Cana Galilææ quatuor distans leucis ab Acone. Hinc sunt duæ leucæ versus meridiem ad villam Ramam (probably Reineh) nomine, quæ sita est sub monte, qui Nazareth usque pertingit.—*Brocardus Descrip. Ter. Sanct.*

<sup>2</sup> Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. iii., p. 205, 206.

possession of the veritable spot where the annunciation took place. From thence we visited again the little Maronite Church, where evening service was also being performed to a congregation of a dozen persons. Wishing to become acquainted with the whole catalogue of wonders which the place now offers to view, we allowed ourselves to be conducted first to Joseph's workshop, and then to the rock table where it is asserted our Lord ate with His disciples both before and after His resurrection. The latter belongs to the Latin Church; and a notice printed in different languages makes known to all who desire to benefit by it, that seven days' plenary indulgence may be obtained by saying one Paternoster and one Ave Maria beside the table.

We rested the Sabbath (26th March) at Nazareth; but a deluge of rain prevented me from attending Mr Klein's Arabic service in the morning, at which there were about fifty Protestants present. He was actively employed in building a school-house at the time of our visit, which should also afford him accommodation for his Sabbath services. He had a zealous coadjutor in the German schoolmaster whose services he has secured. At his request I preached in his house to a small congregation in the afternoon. In the evening the whole of our party drank tea at his house, and much enjoyed the Christian intercourse we held with him and his excellent but delicate wife, who since that time has exchanged the earthly for the heavenly Canaan. It is a remarkable fact that a Jew is not suffered to reside in Nazareth. Our guide, when telling us of this, added with great bitterness, that if one attempted to settle in the town the inhabitants would kill him. The population amounts to about 3000 souls, of which not above a third are Mussulmen; all the rest are Christians.

As the Fountain of the Virgin supplies the whole town with water, and the women are here, as everywhere else throughout the East, the water-carriers, nearly the whole female population of En Násirah must have passed before our tents on their way thither. They have acquired among all travellers a reputation for beauty and gracefulness of gait which seems to rest on good foundation. In the eastern sense of the term, all the Christian women of Nazareth go unveiled, *i.e.*, without the yashmak; but the universal costume of the place, said to have continued unchanged since the Virgin's day, is a veil or cloth fastened to the back of the head, which hangs gracefully down the back. The Greek dragoman drew my attention to this during our stay, saying in rapture,—‘Sir, if you observe attentively all the ancient paintings of the Virgin you will find her always robed in this manner.’ In the pictures of the Virgin, with which the churches,

museums, and private galleries of Europe abound, I do not recollect among the thousands I have seen, one in which the Virgin is so draped; and, if despising bolder flights of genius in the choice of subjects, those who wield the pallet and the brush, must still reproduce the Madonna—hackneyed though the subject be to the verge of loathing—it would at least be some improvement if they would robe her à la Názéráne of the present day. We should in this way get rid of the everlasting red, blue, and yellow, beyond which the old Italian school dared not venture in draping her, through fear of sacrilege, and of the tender mercies of the Holy Office. As for the modern Italian school, its highest efforts, with a few rare exceptions, seem to me never to reach beyond the copy of some old master's *chef d'œuvre*. I know all this exposes me to the charge of heresy in taste as well as in religion. N'importe! I never could be guilty of admiring a picture merely because the *profanum vulgus* of fashionable idlers is in the habit of doing so. This however is a sad digression, suggested by the ladies of Nazareth, to whom I return for a moment to remark that a large proportion of them wear a coiffure of some sort on the head, ornamented with a border composed of silver coins sewed together so closely, that on the top nothing save the edges of the coins are seen, but at the sides they are so arranged as to produce the appearance of scales, and exactly resemble the clasps of a dragoon's helmet. Reference has already been made to this ornament, supposed by some to be 'the round tires like the moon,' spoken of by the Prophet Isaiah (Isaiah iii. 19) when I first observed it as forming part of a woman's head-dress at Beit Zakariyeh. As these coins have all a marketable value, it is not improbable that the women of Nazareth invest their little wealth in this way, as the Italian women do in the gold chains, rings, brooches, and enormous earrings in which they appear both at church and market. One of the matrons thus adorned came to my tent to sell some silver coins of the reigns of Vespasian, Antonius Pius, etc., which had been found at a Jewish village called Shefa Amar, midway between Nazareth and Akka. Having bought these, she allowed me to examine the assortment which formed her head gear; but when, through Shaheen, I tried to purchase it, she declined to part with it at any price.

*March 27.*—We bid adieu to Nazareth so early as six o'clock, that we might reach the Convent of Carmel at mid-day, and Akka (St Jean d'Acre) in the evening; the baggage being dispatched by the direct road to the latter place. Our path lay in a south-westerly direction, across the hills of Nazareth, to regain once more the Plain of Esdraelou.

At 6.30 we saw on the hill side, down a narrow gorge to the left, the village of Yafia, which has been identified with JAPHIA, one of the towns of Zebulun, on the border of Issachar.—Josh. xix. 12. Farther on we passed, in descending, the villages of Hartein and Malûl, both on eminences to the left, the latter on the very edge of the plain, while a ruin lay beneath it on the plain itself, the name of which I could not learn. At 8.10 we passed through a small dirty village, abounding in bee-hives, which stands on a gentle eminence called Jefa. The eastern face of Carmel, stretching away to the south, lay full before us, and the village of El Lejjun (Megiddo) formed a prominent object on one of the spurs projecting from it. There was but one village between us and it, called Ballad Sheikh Abrit, from the Weli of a Mohammedan saint beside it; and the level ground beyond was the scene of Barak's famous battle with the Canaanites, when "the stars in their courses fought against Sisera, and the river of Kishon swept them away, that ancient river, the river Kishon. The kings of Canaan fought in Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo."—Judges v. 19-21. In connection with the fate of Sisera after the battle, an interesting piece of information was given me by Rev. Mr Thomson, of the American Mission at Sidon, whom I had the pleasure of seeing last year (1855) in Leghorn. In the early spring of that year he had discovered the site of HAROSHETH of the Gentiles (Judges iv. 2, 16), to the west of the narrow gorge which separates the Plain of Esdraelon from that of Akka, in a village which, I believe, now bears the name of El Harschiéh. He found the Arabs from the neighbourhood of Hazor encamped there; and having known them in their own territory while he resided at Hasbeiya, he asked how it happened that they had migrated to the West. They replied, that it was their custom always to winter in this plain. This probably has been the custom among them from time immemorial, and accounts for Heber the Kenite's tent being in the neighbourhood of the battle field. It also accounts for Sisera's flying to it for shelter, as Heber's usual camping place seems to have been somewhere in the neighbourhood of Hazor, and he fancied that he might count upon a friendly reception.—Judges iv. 17. That Harosheth could not have been, as usually supposed, near the waters of Merom, seems clear from the fact that Barak pursued the Canaanitish host to the very gates of that town, which would have been impossible had it been situated near Merom—two long days' journey from Megiddo.—Judges iv. 16. The probability that Mr Thomson is correct in his identification is still further confirmed by Barak's attack having been made from Tabor *westward*, towards the sea, all the

coast of which, as unconquered by the Israelites, went in Jewish parlance by the name of the Gentiles, as well as portions of Upper Galilee. As the Arabs from the uplands of the Jordan come down still to the plain in winter, and as the waters of Kishon were swollen at the time of the conflict, we are at no loss to determine the season of the year when the battle took place.

After leaving the village of Jefa there is a considerable change in the scenery. A range of low hills, which are offshoots from those of Nazareth, run out into the plain, so as almost to meet the range of Carmel, thus shutting up the plain of Esdraelon. These hills are beautifully wooded with oak and other trees, among which we saw the quince, covered with white blossom. Having surmounted these, the plain of Akka was full in view before us, with that city in the distance to the north-west; the hills assuming a crescent form from the point where we were to Ras Nakurah, and rising gradually like an amphitheatre. There were several villages scattered upon them, the names of which none of our people knew, and there were no fellahin in sight of whom we could make inquiries. To the south of us rose Carmel, and the ancient river Kishon was seen winding through the narrow valley between it and the heights on which we were. On descending into the plain we found it a complete marsh, in which our horses sunk hopelessly; and as we had already made more than sufficient trial of such work in the Merj el Ghurúk, we turned directly south, and crossed the Kishon (in Arabic, El Mukáta) at a ford, a little below the place where Carmel bends from north to west. The rain of the previous day had swollen the river, which was about eight yards in breadth, and two and a half feet deep. Immediately opposite the ford, and below the crags of Carmel, there is a high green mound, evidently artificial, called Ghebel Mukáta (the Mount of Slaughter), under which, in all probability, lie the bones of the priests of Baal, whom the Prophet Elijah slew on the banks of the Kishon.—1 Kings xviii. 40. Unaware of the discovery which Van de Velde had made of the El Mokhraka (place of burning) on the south-east corner of the mountain, I remarked to my companions at the time, that it must be evident to every one who compares the Scripture narrative with the conformation of the mountain and the course of the Kishon, that the sacrifice of Elijah must have been performed on the eastern or north-eastern side of it. It was below the summit, for his servant was sent up thither to watch for the rising of the cloud from the sea, while he continued in prayer; and it could have been nowhere on the western side, as the sea is seen from every part of it. It is a matter, however,

for further investigation, whether "the place of burning" which M. Van de Velde has discovered, being a mere bare rock, can set aside the probabilities, arising from the popular name which this artificial mound bears, in favour of the place of sacrifice being somewhere above it on the north-eastern crest of the mountain. He does not seem to have visited that part of it, and is evidently unacquainted with the existence of this mound. I could not learn whether there was a pathway leading up from it towards the brow of the mountain, but if there is (and it seemed not difficult of access), the distance to be traversed is not too great to allow of water having been brought from the river, of his descending to the slaughter, and returning again to the altar, within the time specified in the narrative. I feel inclined, in the mean time, to abide by 'the Mount of Slaughter' as the place where execution was done against the foreign priesthood, who were traitors to the service and government of the Most High God; and to urge future travellers to visit both places, and make known the result of their observations on both.

As we rode along the base of Carmel for an hour and a half, I was struck with the strange contrast presented by the bare and treeless summits, and the thickly wooded ravines, with which the sides abound. From whatever cause it arises, it fulfils in a most remarkable manner the prophecy which was uttered concerning it—"The top of Carmel shall wither."—Amos i. 2. After passing another village called Ballad es Shurk, we passed at 10.45 a most copious stream rushing out from the base of the mountain, and forming large pools by the wayside, from which the Kishon is continually fed. It occurs at the distance of a quarter of an hour from the town of Khaifa, to which we rode through a fine grove of date trees, arriving at eleven o'clock. It is a walled town, of small dimensions and great filth, at the south-eastern corner of the bay of Akka. I pitied my friend Mr Rogers in being compelled to reside in so miserable a place. Yet building operations were going on briskly; and, amid mud and stench intolerable, there were various other signs of life and activity about it, owing probably to its being one of the ports at which the French and Austrian steamers touch in their voyages along the coast; and when it is borne in mind how rapidly Beyrout has risen into importance since steam communication was opened up with Syria, there is no reason to despair of Khaifa also within a few years taking a larger development. Some antiquarians have erroneously supposed that this was the Japhia of Zebulun. The Crusaders mistook it for the city of Porphyreon, which lay much farther north; but that it is the



Sycaminum mentioned by Josephus,<sup>1</sup> where Ptolemy Lathurus landed the army wherewith he besieged Ptolemais, is set beyond all doubt by the testimony of Eusebius, that even in his day the ancient Sycaminum went by the name of Hefa.<sup>2</sup> This notwithstanding, Dr Wilson considers it the Mutatio Calamon of the Jerusalem Itinerary, and places Sycaminum some miles south of Carmel, where there are some ruins by the shore. He is mistaken in saying the place is not mentioned by Strabo, for that geographer expressly mentions the towns of Sycaminum, Bucolon, and the Crocodile city as occurring between Akka and Cæsarea.<sup>3</sup> The ruins Dr Wilson observed to the south of Carmel probably are those of Bucolon, which Strabo mentions second in the list. There are a few Christians and Jews in Khaifa, but the majority of the population, amounting to about 3000 souls, is Mohammedan. We only halted for a few minutes within its walls, while some of the party inquired about the sailing of the Austrian steamer, and I went to the French consul (in Mr Rogers' absence), to learn the latest tidings from Europe regarding the war.

Passing through the western gate of the town, we rode for about a mile along a narrow plain covered with olive trees of venerable age, and then began the ascent of Carmel, by a well-made but very steep road, which ends at the convent. We were hospitably received by Padre Carlo, who showed us over the wing of the building destined for the reception of travellers, of which he is very proud; as it was by his own indefatigable begging during a tour in Europe that he raised the money for its accomplishment. No charge is made for the entertainment afforded; but it is a well understood thing that travellers are expected, before leaving, to deposit in a box in the church a sum equal to that which would have been charged at an hotel. We had brought our lunch with us in our saddle-bags according to custom—usually a biscuit and a bit of cheese—which seemed rather to disconcert the Padre, and put his major-domo, a fiery little Italian, in such a passion, that he quarrelled with our dragomen, and we had some difficulty in preventing them from coming to blows. The superior made his appearance for a few minutes, and was most gracious. After expressing his regret that we had not allowed his house to supply our wants, he treated us to a bottle of the famed vino d'oro of Mount Lebanon, so called from its golden colour. It is a strong-bodied wine, of high flavour; and is generally known in England,

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib. xiii. cap. 12.

<sup>2</sup> Reland. Pal. p. 1024.

<sup>3</sup> Reland. Pal. p. 434, where the text of Strabo is quoted.

would become popular. Though little care is now bestowed on its manufacture, the wine of Lebanon still retains its ancient renown. 'The scent thereof shall be as the wine of Lebanon.'—Hosea xiv. 7. Padre Carlo showed us the church, which was being daubed over with hideous frescoes in staring colours by a tenth-rate Italian artist. Under the high altar there is a grotto, which he declared was the dwelling-place of Elijah; but that was scarcely so startling as the announcement which immediately followed, that the fraternity had existed on the mountain in an unbroken line of—I suppose it must be called *prophetical* succession since Elijah's days. The monkish order of the Carmelites in the Papal Church takes its rise from this convent, and they received their rules from St Basil. There is a tolerable library connected with the convent, in which I observed a collection of the patristic writings, and a Latin Bible. The view from the flat roof, however, was the object of chief attraction. The convent is built on the extreme western promontory of the mountain, and on that side there is nothing to be seen but the open sea. To the east the bare mountain side rises far above the convent, excluding all view in that direction; but north and south the view is most extensive. In the former direction, the town of Acre, eight or ten miles distant, is the principal object, standing on a low promontory, in which the beautiful curved sandy bay of Acre ends. From Carmel it looks a most imposing place. Behind it some ten miles farther north, the hills of Galilee stretch westward to the sea, ending in another bold promontory called Ras el Nakurah. To the south, along the sea-shore, the Padre pointed out to us Athlit, the Castellum Perigrinorum of the Crusaders; Tanturah, the ancient Dor (Joshua xi. 2, xii. 23), which was a royal city of the Canaanites, but afterwards fell to the lot of the half tribe of Manasseh; and in the far distance the site of the ruins of Kaisariyah, the Cesarea of Palestine built by Herod, to which, as the place of Paul's imprisonment, so much interest attaches.

The ride from Nazareth to the gate of the convent had been accomplished in six hours; and after resting in it for a couple of hours more, we bade farewell to the Padres, and soon reached Khaifa again. From thence, passing again through the date-grove, we kept along the shore; and in ten minutes from the gates crossed the Kishon at its confluence with the sea, where we found it a rapid stream three feet deep, and about ten yards in width. The ride from thence to Akka was along the fine sandy beach the whole way, and occupied two hours; a chain of low sand-hills, between the beach and the plain, shutting out,

during the greater part of our journey, all view of the latter. We had abundant evidence of the inhospitable nature of the coast; for we counted on the sands no less than eight wrecked vessels in various stages of decay, one of which was a French vessel that had been driven on shore but a week before. Her crew had made a rude tent with one of the sails, and were endeavouring to save such portions of the cargo and spars as the heavy surf washed up. We passed immense quantities of sponge in the course of our ride—a satisfactory reason for which was given us by the Greek dragoman, a native of Beyrout. It appears that the Bay of Acre, from Carmel to Ras el Nakurah, is one of the most prolific fishing-grounds for sponges along the whole coast, though those got between Latakia and Tripoli are reckoned of finer quality. Native vessels from Rhodes and Smyrna come down here to engage in it during the summer months; and the sponges which we passed were those which the fishers had either failed to secure, or had cast away as worthless. Whether they belong to the animal or vegetable world is a question for naturalists to decide; but in either case they grow attached to rocks and stones, and are obtained both by diving and dredging. I have seen at Smyrna some beautiful specimens in shape like a huge inverted mushroom, still attached to the stone on which they grew. So far as I could learn, the inhabitants of Acre take no part in this trade, which, if properly developed, might become a source of considerable wealth to them. A quarter of a mile before reaching the gates, we crossed a small stream called Nahr Namaani, the river Belus of bygone days, from the sand of which Pliny informs us that glass was first discovered by some ‘ancient mariners,’ who had accidentally cast nitre on a fire they had kindled on its banks.<sup>1</sup>

We pitched our tents within the walls in an open space, once occupied, as we were told, by the powder magazine, which was blown up by the shells from the English fleet during the bombardment of 1840; and the huge piles of conglomerate bricks and mortar scattered around gave evidence of the correctness of the report. We set out at once to visit the town, which, as viewed from the interior, does not appear at all so formidable a place as it is generally represented to be. It bears everywhere marks of the iron hail which England showered upon it, but nowhere more strikingly than in the once beautiful mosque of Ahmad Pasha Jezzár, which is now a complete ruin. The tomb of this pasha was pointed out to us within the enclosure, and

<sup>1</sup> Plinii Hist. Nat. lib. xxxvi., cap. 26.

most books of travel have recorded some of the anecdotes still circulated regarding him. He was a bloody monster, and gloried in his acts of cruelty, for the surname of Jezzár (Butcher) was self-assumed. The bazaars are dark and dirty, but larger than any we had seen since leaving Jerusalem. After having wandered for a while through the town, and visited the fortifications facing the sea, we visited the Jewish synagogue, which is a miserable low-roofed room in a dingy quarter of the town. There were about a dozen Jews present, engaged in evening prayer. They reckon the number of their nation resident in the town at 140 souls. Mr Finzi, the British consular agent, is one of them, and lives right opposite the synagogue. His dress was a curious compound between that of the British sailor and an Arab, his rank being indicated by a broad band of gold-lace round his cap. He was on board one of the ships during the bombardment, and gave us some account of it in a curious jargon, composed of English, Italian, and German, in which the last predominated. He pressed us to pay a visit to the Pasha next morning before starting, as that functionary liked to see all the travellers who passed. It was arranged that he should come to our tents in the morning to introduce us; and after listening to his complaint that the British government allowed him no salary, we took our leave, and got back to our tents. Though Mr Finzi gets no salary, it must not be supposed that the only benefit his consular agency brings him is the fee which he derives from the few ships which touch at Acre in the course of the year. To be the consular representative of any European nation, and more particularly of England or France, is a position earnestly coveted both by Jews and native Christians, on account of the privileges which attach to the office throughout the Turkish empire; and Mr Finzi knows full well that his position as a poor eastern Jew would be immensely changed, if the right to wear the gold-lace band upon his cap were cancelled. I have a strong impression of the impolicy of entrusting the honour and the interests of England to any but natives of Great Britain as consular agents; and, notwithstanding the prejudice which exists at home against allowing those who hold such offices to engage in trade, I am convinced that respectable merchants stationed at Akka, Tyre, Sidon, etc., as vice-consuls, with a small salary and with permission to trade, would contribute greatly to develop the industry of the inhabitants of Syria, by opening up channels for the disposal of their produce. At present Beyrout is the only port between Scanderún and Akka by which there is an outlet for the surplus produce of Syria, and the expense of transport, and other difficulties in the way of bringing

it to market, acts as a discouragement to industry on those who live at a distance. If, through a British merchant's connections at home, vessels were sent to load grain, oil, and other produce at Akka, Tyre, and Sidon during the summer, when there is no danger to be apprehended from gales on the coast, the knowledge of a market within reach where they could dispose of their goods, without incurring great expense in carriage, would afford strong incentives to greater industry on the part of the natives in the interior. As an instance in point, it has lately come to my knowledge that a house in Bristol largely engaged in the grocery business, was led a few years ago, at the suggestion of a clergyman, to send out an order to Palestine for raisins. The first year there was great difficulty in getting a sufficient supply to complete the order; but the exportation of raisins has since then become a regular branch of trade, and the demand is now so great that there is a considerable advance on the prices originally paid.

Akka contains a population of 10,000 inhabitants. I have already indicated it or Khaifa on the other side of the bay as places still unoccupied either by the Anglican or American missions; and if any of the Presbyterian churches of Scotland desire to establish a mission in Palestine, for the spiritual welfare both of the Jews and Arabs, it seems to me that a sea-port town, such as one of those now mentioned, would be the most fitting station to occupy, as opportunities would then in course of time present themselves, whereby the converts might earn their own livelihood. Among the pious merchants of our own land, there are many, I doubt not, who, following the noble example of the Bristol house alluded to above, would be willing to run some risk for so important an object,—even apart from the consideration that thereby they are preparing the way for the fulfilment of the prophecy, 'The Gentiles shall bring all your brethren for an offering to the Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters, and upon mules, and upon swift beasts, to my holy mountain Jerusalem, saith the Lord.'—Isaiah lxvi. 20.

*28th March.*—I was awakened during the night by some animal leaping on my bed, and immediately discharged a camp-stool at the intruder, which made him beat a quick retreat. Whether it was a jackal or one of the mangy dogs of the town, I could not ascertain; for though I struck a light, and commenced an immediate search, the unwelcome visitor had disappeared through an opening at the bottom of the tent. Accompanied by Mr Finzi, we went to Reschid Pasha's house at half-past six, and found him ready to receive us. Our

audience took place in the garden, where seats were set for us; and he asked many questions about our journey. In turn, we asked him the latest news from Constantinople, and were much surprised to find that he was nearly a month in arrear. The information we had derived from the French vice-consul at Khaifa was all strange to him. After we had been served with pipes and coffee, we were about to retire, having received his permission to visit the fortifications, when his attention was aroused by Mr Smith's revolver. This excited his curiosity greatly, as he had never seen one; and after examining it attentively, he begged its owner to fire it. An Arab gardener was at work at the other end of the garden, and Mr Smith hesitated. 'Oh, never mind him, fire away,' said his Excellency, as if an Arab more or less in his Pashalik were a matter of no moment. Shot after shot was discharged, with scarcely the interval of a second between them, evidently to his great delight, as he accompanied each report by a *wallah* or *mishallah*.

From his residence we proceeded to the guard-house, from which access is had to the fortifications: and in passing through it we came upon a den, closed by an iron-grated door, through which innumerable hands were extended, accompanied by loud cries of *backshish*, *backshish*, from a set of pale, haggard, chain-bound prisoners. It was the Bagnio of Akka, and contained about eighty galley-slaves. Their shouts of *kateir herug*, 'many thanks,' testified their gratitude for the few paras we bestowed upon them. The fortifications towards the east or land side of the town are very strong; and cannons, mortars, and piles of shot are found there in great abundance. Many of the guns, however, are dismantled; and I observed the carriages of others in such a state of rottenness, that they would share a similar fate by the first discharge. Some of the cannon are of Scotch manufacture, and bear the name of the Carron Works. From the ramparts we had an excellent view of the town with its lofty mosque, of the plain towards the east, and of Mount Carmel on the other side of the bay. A Turkish lieutenant of artillery and a gunner accompanied us; and as we departed, each stood, as a matter of course, to receive the *backshish*, and saluted in correct military style. Acre had more interesting associations for me than those awakened by the Templars, Napoleon, Sidney Smith, or Charley Napier, though all their names are connected with it. It was one of the cities of the ancient Phœnicians, which the tribe of Asher could not conquer; and the name of *Accho*, which it then bore, is almost identical with that which it now gets from the modern inhabitants of the land.—Judges

i. 31. In New Testament times it went by the name of Ptolemais ; and in the time of Paul there were Christian brethren in it, with whom he abode one day.—Acts xxi. 7.

We left the town at twenty minutes before eight, and rode for some time at the distance of a mile from the sea, along the side of the aqueduct which brings water from the hills. In half an hour we were opposite El Baghah, the palace of Ibrahim Pasha, to which a beautiful orange grove and extensive gardens are attached ; and at 8.50 we reached El Motrah, another palace with gardens, which once belonged to Abdallah Pasha, the besieger of Sanúr. We had a fine view of the extensive plain and of the hills of Nazareth as we rode along ; but there was nothing to interest us in the immediate neighbourhood of our path, until at ten o'clock, after crossing the little stream of El Mezráah, we came to a small village on the shore, called Zib, round which two or three sickly palms were growing. This is the Achzib of the tribe of Asher (Josh. xix. 29 ; Jud. i. 31), and the Ecdippa of Josephus, Pliny, and Eusebius. At 10.50 we crossed another small stream called Nahr el Mesherbah, which runs close to the foot of the Ras el Nakúrah, where workmen were employed in building a new khan, and immediately began the steep ascent. From hence a chain of hills stretches away to the east as far as the eye can reach, which our men called Ghebel Kenétri. A small khan resembling an Irish cabin stands on the summit of the Ras, which rises perpendicularly many hundred feet out of the sea. Here we lost sight of Carmel, the plain of Akka, and the hills of Galilee, and in exchange caught our first view of Sur, the ancient Mistress of the Sea. In descending again towards the shore we passed an ancient bridge at 11.30, and traced the old Roman road from thence to the Khan Nakúrah, beside which we halted at noon for lunch.

At one o'clock we made a fresh start, and rode through thickets of thorns and dwarf oak, in the midst of which from time to time we still traced the Roman road. After we had been gone twenty minutes from Khan Nakúrah we came to Nahr el Hamúl, a small stream by the side of which, about a hundred yards to the right of our path, there were ruins of some extent, and three pillars standing erect, from which the place seems to derive its modern name, as it is called Kharbet Om el Ahmúd (Ruin of the Mother of Pillars). At 1.55 we had arrived at the ruins of Scandaruna, a place mentioned in the Jerusalem Itinerary by the name of Mutatio Alexandroskene, or the tent of Alexander, probably from his having formed an encampment here while besieging Tyre, or on his march along the coast after its con-

quest. Near these ruins there is a beautiful fountain by the side of the path, and on the hill to the right a modern village called Reis. A few hundred yards beyond the fountain at Scandaruna, the difficult ascent of the Ras el Abiyad begins; a considerable part of which on both sides of the promontory is by steps regularly cut in the rock, which are popularly spoken of as the work of Alexander the Great, though the name, Ladder of Tyre, by which this famous ascent is better known, would lead to the conclusion that these stairs are of Phœnician origin. The Ras el Abiyad (the White Cape) is the promontory called by Pliny, Promontorium Album. At its summit there is a little filthy hut, dignified with the name of Khan Khamrah. On the hill above it stands a ruined tower at the head of a deep ravine. A little farther inland is the modern village of Alma, more than one-half of the population of which has now become Protestant. The manner in which this happened was afterwards related to me by Mr Thomson. There are two Sheikhs belonging to the village, one of whom was unjustly expelled by the other. The banished Sheikh betook himself for a while to some other village, where he met with the books printed by the American missionaries. The contents of these he eagerly devoured, and on his return to his native village he took them with him, and read them to his friends. The consequence was, that he and all his party declared themselves Protestants, and applied for spiritual instruction to Mr Thomson, who often goes down from Sidon to visit them. From the top of the Ladder we had a fine view of the ancient Queen of the Sea. Tyre is situated on a promontory, and bears a striking resemblance to Akka, the difference, if any, being all in favour of the former, which at a distance has a most imposing appearance. My first impressions were, that if that imposing town was really Tyre, the descriptions which have been given so often of it as a miserable village occupied only by a handful of fishermen, must be greatly overdrawn. It took us about half an hour to get over the promontory, and on the northern side of it we came, at 2.35, to ruins of considerable extent, bearing the name of Kharbet Khamrah. A modern village stands high up on the hill, called Beit Eseyeh. The scenery generally was without interest, as we travelled by the side of the Roman road along a flat strip of ground between the sea and the hills; the latter approaching the coast sometimes to within less than a quarter of an hour, and at others receding for a couple of miles. At ten minutes' distance from the ruins of Khamrah we came upon others called Kharbet Malfénah, close to the sea. By a quarter past three o'clock we reached a dry torrent with an old Roman bridge in



ruins, and on the hills to the east, between Malfénah and it, had passed the villages of El Mansouri, Aziéh, and Henniýeh. On the plain, a little to the south of the latter, there were other ruins to the right of the road, among which many pillars were still standing, but I could not learn their name. At 3.30 we arrived at a considerable stream coming down from the fountains at Ras el Ain, and turned to the eastward up a narrow wadi to visit these celebrated reservoirs of the ancient Phœnicians. A number of mills were erected on the stream, by the side of which our path lay under the shade of a row of trees. There were some gardens on the other side of the path full of mulberry and fig trees, in which I remarked also rows of tobacco and many large shrubs of the palma christi. We found on arrival at the village of Ras el Ain, four birkets or tanks, built up with huge blocks of stone from twenty to thirty feet above the level of the wadi; one, octagonal in form, being of much larger dimensions than the others. The supply of water is evidently derived from springs at the bottom, as it came bubbling up with great force to the surface. These pools are supposed to have been constructed not so much with a view of collecting a supply of water as of raising it to a higher level, that thus it might be carried to the ancient city. There has been originally a communication between them all, but it remains entire in only two of them at present; so that the water from one or two of them now forms the stream running westward into the sea, while the water from the others is conveyed away by an aqueduct towards the north-east, evidently in the direction of Palætyre. According to tradition, these reservoirs were constructed by Solomon for his friend Hiram, king of Tyre, in return for the services he had rendered him. The character of their construction would lead to the inference that they belong to that period; but it is much more probable that they are of Phœnician than Jewish origin, as in those days the former had the start of the latter in all the arts of civilization.

The language of the geographer Scylax, who lived in the times of Darius Hystaspes, seems to indicate this as the position of Palætyre, for he speaks of a river running through the midst of it, which could be none other than the stream discharged from these fountains. Strabo also states the distance between insular Tyre and old Tyre to be thirty stadia, which pretty well agrees with the situation of Ras el Ain.<sup>1</sup> Indeed

<sup>1</sup> Παλιὸν Τυροῦ πόλις καὶ ποταμὸς διὰ μεσητῆς ὄρει.—Scylax.

Μετὰ δὲ τῆν Τυροῦ ἢ Παλαιτύρου ἐν τριακοντὰ σταδίοις.—Strabo.

Reland. Pal., p. 432, 433.

he tells us that ancient Tyre, meaning thereby both the city on the mainland and on the island, had a circuit of nineteen miles; and I am indebted to Mr Thomson for the information, that a line drawn from Ras el Ain by Tell Hobesh to the shore, encircling the island, would be as nearly as possible nineteen miles in extent. This Tell Hobesh lies about a quarter of an hour to the north of Ras el Ain, and is believed to have been the Acropolis of Palætyre. Van De Velde found old foundations laid with large stones there. But if any doubt still existed that the situation of the mainland city was in this neighbourhood, it has been entirely removed by discoveries made since my visit. A Turkish Effendi in 1855 began to build on a large scale both at Ras el Ain and in the direction of Tell Hobesh; and, in digging deep to lay the foundations, his workmen found the ground full of ancient substructions. The position of the ancient city is thus put beyond all doubt; while, at the same time, the truth of history and the fulfilment of prophecy are strikingly confirmed. ‘They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water,’ said the Almighty; and history tells us how Alexander ‘scraped her dust from her’ in order to form the celebrated mound by which he joined insular Tyre to the mainland, and gave his armies access to its walls. The smoothness of the surface of the plain and hills immediately around contrasts so strikingly with the rough features of the general landscape, as naturally to suggest that the hand of man must have been at work on it, and now, by digging deep, a remnant is found to testify that old Tyre stood where a casual observer might have sworn with safety there was not the remotest trace of a city. Upon what grounds Dr Wilson broaches the theory that Tyre was first built upon the island, and was afterwards extended to the mainland, it is difficult to conceive. The earliest mention made of Tyre in Scripture, viz., in the division of the Land of Canaan by Joshua (Josh. xix. 29), and in the numbering of the men of Israel by David (2 Sam. xxiv. 7), would rather lead to the opposite conclusion, that Tyre took its rise on the mainland, which is confirmed by the name of Palætyre given to it by Scylax, Strabo, and Josephus. Indeed if Dius, the Phœnician historian, quoted by Josephus, is to be believed, it is clear that up to the time of Hiram the island was not yet occupied as a town, but was regarded as the fane of Jupiter Olympus.<sup>1</sup> On the hills to the east and south of these fountains, several villages were in sight, and the Sheikh of the place gave me their names as follows:—Anoún, Esmá-

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Contr. Apion, Lib. i. sect. 17.

aníyeh, Bétula, Zibren, Leiteh, Shamma, Burj, and Kanah. The latter has been identified with the KANAH of the tribe of Asher.—Josh. xix. 28.

Having examined the ancient reservoirs of Ras el Ain we returned to the sea shore, and, after an hour's ride along the soft sandy beach, ascended the peninsula, and pitched our tents between some gardens of mulberry trees, which surround a ruined church or castle, and the walls of the town. On nearing the town I found that it was not so imposing as it had appeared to be from the Promontorium Album, as it is much indebted for its air of grandeur at a distance to the ruins which lie chiefly on the southern side of the promontory. The modern Súr is built at the north-eastern extremity of the former island. It is a small town, and presents its worst aspect to the traveller as he enters the gate, for he immediately finds himself in a long, dark, covered street, with miserable booths on either side, which constitutes the bazaar. Beyond it, however, there are one or two streets of new houses, well built, and several storeys in height, which run from north to south across the island. In the course of our rambles through the town we came upon a Maronite church, and, having found the priest in the act of closing it, we made good an entrance. It was a small plain building, with nothing remarkable to attract attention within. The priest spoke but two or three words of the *Lingua Franca*, so we were obliged to ply him with all the Arabic we were masters of. From him we learned, what the English consular agent afterwards confirmed, that the population of Modern Tyre is about 5000 souls, which is pretty nearly divided between Christians and Metuwalihs, a race of nominal Mohammedans, who are to be met with in various parts of Lebanon. A considerable portion of the western part of the island is under cultivation, and few ruins are to be seen in that direction. There are rocks on the shore in abundance for fishermen to spread their nets. The present port of Tyre lies on the northern side of the promontory, and is protected by a wall, which, after running out in a northerly direction, curves eastward towards the shore of the mainland, thus affording shelter from the western blasts. In ancient times it must have proved a valuable harbour of refuge on a lee-shore, but it is now so much silted up with sand that vessels of large size cannot enter it. It still exhibits striking proofs of the ruin which Alexander the Great wrought on insular Tyre. A sort of jetty on one side is formed in great measure of granite columns which once adorned the city, and, looking down into the clear water, one sees many others which have been cast into the sea. The prophecy of Ezekiel has thus

obtained a very complete, because a double, accomplishment, on the mainland and on the island—‘They shall lay thy stones and thy timber and thy dust in the midst of the water.’ Our walk through the town ended on the southern side, where we saw the ruins of what had once been a Christian church, among which was a very remarkable double column of red granite, that not improbably belonged originally to the temple of the Olympian Jove, which stood there before it. Outside the wall of the modern town, the whole of the southern part of the peninsula is covered with ruins; and, as these have now become a quarry to supply Sidon and Beyrout, fallen columns of marble and granite are being constantly brought to light. To Mr Thomson I am again indebted for the knowledge of an interesting discovery which he made respecting insular Tyre. About 300 yards to the west of the covered wells on the Mound of Alexander, which now supply the town, he explored a vault running across the peninsula, which formed a casemate within the fortified wall of the island city, on the very side on which it was attacked by Alexander. The loop-holes in the wall still remain entire. From the tents, we could see the curve which in ancient times the shore must have taken ere the free course of the waters was interrupted by the hands of the young Macedonian. Mount Hermon, clad in snow, and crimsoned by the reflection of the setting sun, was one of the grandest features in that remarkable landscape.

*March 29.*—My first visit after breakfast was to the covered wells, which are a few hundred yards before the gate. The water is drawn from a great depth below, and it is probable that there is some connection between them and the aqueducts that run from the Ras el Ain. An ancient sarcophagus, ornamented with ram’s head and horns, is now converted into a trough outside the building. Across the plain there is another aqueduct, which seems to have taken its rise at a place called El Máshuk, about an hour to the east of the present town. The broken arches of this Roman aqueduct form one of the prominent features in almost every sketch or engraving one sees of Tyre. We paid another visit to the town, that we might examine it more fully, and meditate over fallen greatness. Numbers of fishing-boats were drawn up on the beach of the little port, but it was not my good fortune to see any fisher’s nets spread out to dry. A visit was next paid to the son of the late British consular agent, who had come to our tents to announce that he had for sale some ancient coins and gems that had been found among the ruins. The collection, though small, was an interesting one, and I was fortunate enough to secure a

gem, having the casque-clad head of a Phœnician warrior incised upon it, and several brass coins, one of which bore the effigy of Alexander, with the ram's horns, assumed after his visit to the Temple of Jupiter Ammon in the Lybian Desert, as the heraldic symbol of his descent from that deity.<sup>1</sup> During all my wanderings of the previous night and of this morning, the descriptions which we have been accustomed to read in most books of travels of Tyre, as 'a miserable village, inhabited only by a few fishermen,' haunted my memory, and I have no hesitation in describing them as exaggerations, calculated to produce mischievous effects. Whatever she may have been in the last century, Tyre has not for many years past been at so low an ebb as to deserve the name of 'a miserable village'—a town with a population of 5000 souls cannot be so called—nor does the cause of truth, or the fulfilment of prophecy, require that she should be so represented. I learned that within the last seven years building had increased in it, and that a direct commerce with Europe was beginning to spring up. During the previous year (1853) one English and fifteen French vessels had come to the roads and loaded there, and the consular agents entertained hopes that this direct commerce, as opposed to that through mercantile establishments at Beyrout, would increase. For the benefit of the surrounding district of country, it is much to be desired it should. The principal articles of commerce are wheat, barley, sesame, and dried figs. Admitting Tyre to be a little town of the Turco-Arab type, and her commerce to be something more than the few fish which her fishers barter against articles of sustenance, God's prophecies against her are still most signally fulfilled. To Tyre, as the emporium of commerce, the riches of the east and of the north were once brought by way of Damascus, and the riches of India and Africa by way of Eziongeber and Jerusalem (Ezek. xxvii.), and from thence wafted in her vessels to Chittim, to her daughter Carthage, to the coasts of the Mediterranean, and even as far as to Britain itself, while all her commerce now does not give occupation to a score of vessels; and her port choked up with sand, gives abundant evidence that she never will rise again to her former greatness. How are the mighty fallen! 'They shall take up a lamentation for thee, and say to thee, How art thou destroyed that wast inhabited of

<sup>1</sup> Mr Tobin afterwards showed me a collection of gold Alexander pieces, I think twenty in number, found at Sidon, which he purchased in Beyrout, the effigy on which was exactly the same as on my copper coin, including the ram's horns. They were as fresh as if they had issued from the mint but a few months before.

sea-faring men, the renowned city, which wast strong in the sea, she and her inhabitants, which cause their terror to be on all that haunt it.'—Ezek. xxvi. 17.

As we were leaving the town, one of the dragomen pointing to some of the Metuwalihis said, 'These are bad men, they worship the sun.' On a subsequent occasion, in travelling down the plain of Cœle-Syria, we met more of them, when the dragoman attending Mr Ghebard, who was then with me, came up to us, and, with a most mysterious shake of the head, exclaimed, 'These are bad men.' Why so? we inquired. 'They worship their women,' was the reply. I made special inquiry afterwards of Dr Eli Smith at Beyrout, whether there was really any ground for such allegations, and was assured, so far as the Metuwalihis are concerned, there was not; yet it is sufficiently striking that in the region where Baal and Ashtaroth were once universally worshipped, popular belief should still ascribe to the inhabitants the worship of the sun and of Venus. Dr Smith told me that the tribe of the Ismaelis, dwelling, if I recollect aright, near the Euphrates, still practise the impure rights of Venus; and it is supposed that the Ausarii in the north of Syria, and in Caramania, whose religious tenets are as great a mystery as those of the Druses, worship the sun. I should have liked, had time permitted, to visit the ancient Phœnician tomb which goes by the name of Kábur Hirán, and is believed to have been the last resting-place of Solomon's friend. It is about an hour from Tyre, on the way to Kánah, and is a large sarcophagus resting on a pedestal of solid masonwork. A minute description is given of it both by Dr Robinson and M. Van de Velde.<sup>1</sup>

We bade adieu to Tyre about eight o'clock, and for an hour had a dull uninteresting ride through heavy sand, till we reached the Nahr el Khasmíyeh, a broad deep river flowing with great rapidity, which we crossed by a bridge of ancient structure, the upper part of which has been modernized and put in good repair. Another of those huts which in Syria are dignified with the name of khans, stands on the south side of it. This river was anciently called the Leontes. It takes its rise near Baalbek, and in its course through the plain of Cœle-Syria bears now the name of Litani. The baggage animals had gone on before us, and just as we approached the bridge we descried Hanna running back towards us, waving for assistance. On galloping forward to the caravan, we found that in wading through a branch of the Khasmíyeh to the north of the main stream, the mule which carried

<sup>1</sup> Robinson's *Biblical Researches*, vol. iii. p. 385. Van de Velde, vol. i. p. 184.

my portmanteaus had fallen, and the careless mukhari not being at hand, had been carried down the stream some distance and nearly drowned. When it was recovered, I had the pleasure of finding one of my portmanteaus full of water, and clothes, books, papers, curiosities, etc., not only drenched, but defiled with the mud which the river carries with it in solution. A hurried examination of the contents showed that no remedy could be adopted there, and in this state I was obliged to send it on to Saida. Such an accident is one of the smaller annoyances to which a traveller in Syria must make up his mind. At ten o'clock we passed by the wayside a troop of Khurd shepherds from beyond Aleppo, who were leading their flocks to Akka and other places farther south for sale. They had a very picturesque appearance, being dressed in shaggy capotes, and turbans surmounted by high conical caps of lamb's skin, like those worn by the Persians, and all well armed with pistols and yataghans. The scenery resembled that of the previous day's journey—a range of bare and often precipitous hills running parallel with the coast, at a distance varying from a quarter of a mile to a mile and a half. A flat strip of land intervenes, along which the Roman road runs unbroken almost the whole way between Tyre and Sidon. The rough ill-jointed blocks with which it is paved made the journey very tedious, and we were glad when we found a path by the side of it for our horses' feet. At 10.45 we passed extensive ruins to the right, and our path, close to the sea, crossed an ancient tessellated pavement, perhaps once belonging to the public baths of the town, a considerable portion of which yet remains entire. A village on the hill above bears the name of Adlún, which is also given to the ruins. The perpendicular crags behind are riddled with ancient Phœnician sepulchres, which, on examination, we found to resemble those in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Scylax, Strabo, and other authorities, mention a town called Ornithopolis as lying midway<sup>1</sup> between Tyre and Sidon; and this ruined town Adlún so well corresponds with the description that it is admitted I believe on all hands to be identical with it. There was another village on the heights not far distant, called Nesariyah or Ansariyah. At 11.15 we crossed a small torrent called Nahr Abou Aswád, over which there is a Roman bridge still entire, consisting of a single high arch.

At 12.10 we had a village on the hill to the right of us called Sarfend, and in a line with it between us and the shore were the ruins

<sup>1</sup> *Ἐν τῷ μετὰ τὸ πόλιχμιον Ορνιθῶν πόλιν λεγόμενῃ*—Strabo quoted by Reland. p. 433.

of the ancient Sarepta or 'Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon,' where the widowed hostess of the Prophet Elijah dwelt, whose 'barrel of meal wasted not, and whose cruise of oil failed not, until the day that the Lord sent rain upon the earth.'—1 Kings xvii. 9, 14; Luke iv. 26. It is probably the same which Scylax names Sura, which however he places farther south between Ornithopolis and Leontopolis, a town which De Saulcy believes he has discovered beside the Khan Khasmíyeh, though we did not observe ruins there. In riding among the ruins of Sarepta, we met with many plants of a species of the *Arum*, which was new to me, in full flower; and if our Lord had it in view when He contrasted Solomon's glory with the lilies of the field, nothing could have been more appropriate. The inside surface of the flower was dark purple spotted over with golden stars, giving it all the appearance of a leopard skin, prepared with the far-famed Tyrian dye. I brought away several specimens, and tried, though unsuccessfully, to preserve them. Another bulbous plant which grows along the sea coast in immense abundance, is the Squill (*Scilla Maritima*), which is largely used in medicine in England.

After passing Sarepta, we rode on for twenty minutes, and then halted for lunch at a splendid fountain called Ain Khantérah, shaded by many trees. We met here the French Postal Agent, travelling from Beyrout to Akka *en grande tenue*, with kavass, dragoman and servants, but he had no later news to communicate from the seat of war than what we had got at Khaifa. While wandering on the shore before remounting, Mr Fletcher's Greek dragoman picked up some small shells and gave them to me, with the assurance that these were the veritable *murex* shells from which the Tyrian purple dye was obtained. They are said to abound still all the way along the coast from Beyrout to Tyre, though no longer turned to use as of old. After leaving Ain Khantérah there was little to interest by the way. At 2.55 we crossed a mountain torrent called Nahr Zaherani, having the ruins of an ancient bridge about a quarter of a mile to the left, and the village of El Khasíyah on the heights above. At 3.20 we crossed Nahr Yaník, and five minutes afterwards came to a pillar lying by the wayside, which proved to be a Roman milestone, bearing the name of Septimius Severus. We passed another half a mile nearer Sidon; but as both have been often described, and the inscriptions given, it is not necessary to do so here.

Sidon, like Akka and Tyre, is situated on a promontory projecting into the sea; but though larger than the latter, it does not make so grand an appearance at a distance, probably from not being seen from any commanding position. The narrow strip of land between the sea



and the mountains widens into a bay, by the retirement of the latter opposite Sidon. How far the territory of the Phœnicians extended inland across the hills is uncertain. This narrow strip of land, however, which extends from the Ladder of Tyre to the Nahr el Auli beyond Sidon, was the chief corn-producing district of the Phœnicians; and as the supplies were not sufficient for the population, it is easy to comprehend their anxiety to make up their quarrel with Herod Agrippa. 'Their country was nourished by the king's country.'—Acts xii. 20. There is no ground for supposing that our blessed Lord ever trod the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon; for the place to which He retired, when the Syro-Phœnician woman came to Him begging for a share in the blessings He had to bestow, though it was but crumbs falling from the Master's table, was evidently situated among the hills where the boundaries of Galilee met those of the Phœnician territory.—Mark vii. 24. We rode along an avenue bordered by trees, having fine gardens on either side stocked with oranges and broad-leaved bananas, for more than a mile before reaching the town. I was exceedingly amused with a specimen of digging made easy, which I observed in one of these gardens for the first time, but which I afterwards met with on several occasions on Lebanon and at the Nahr el Kelb. A man was digging a trench about a foot and a half deep with a wooden shovel, similar to those farmers use at home in the barn floor. A rope tied round the end of the shaft was held by three men on the edge of the trench, and when the operator had inserted the shovel in the earth, they hauled up its contents, his share of the work simply consisting in steadying it. The highest part of the town of Sidon is toward the south, where the citadel also stands, forming a prominent landmark to the approaching traveller. Having surmounted a steep rising ground on the eastern side of the town, we pitched our tents at four o'clock in a grove of trees close to the eastern gate. My first business was to unpack my portmanteau, and hang out its dripping contents on the tent cords to dry, setting Hanna to act as guard. It must be confessed that the tent assumed very much the appearance of an 'old clothes' shop in Rag Fair or Monmouth Street, and probably in expectation of an auction, many of the inhabitants gathered round it.

The time thus lost, and the shutting of the gates at sunset, deprived me of the opportunity of visiting Mr Thomson, though had I known that his house was upon the wall, I might have despised the gate, and been 'let down in a basket,' as my betters had been before me. This, however, I learned only a year afterwards, when I saw Mr Thomson

in Leghorn. Our party set out to visit the town, which is considerably larger than Tyre. After wandering through its lifeless bazaars, we made our way to the French khan, or factory, which was erected by Fakhir ed Din in the seventeenth century. It is a large quadrangular building, having a fountain in the middle of the court, and covered galleries round the upper storey. An old Italian woman resides in a part of it, and provides lodgings for travellers who have no tents of their own; but the accommodation was so poor that Mr Fletcher, who once intended availing himself of it, preferred his tent with all the noise of mules, mukharis, and jackals. From the French khan we went to the mole, or bridge of seven arches, which leads out to an old castle that was bombarded by the English fleet in 1840, and has been suffered to remain in a ruinous state ever since. Here we saw, as at Tyre, great quantities of granite pillars lying under water, and others built into the mole. Alongside it there were two small speranzellas loaded with oranges, bananas, poultry, and passengers, about to start, one for Beyrout, and the other for Yaffa. The commerce of the place, which is now inconsiderable but capable of development, consists chiefly in silk, fruits, wheat, and sesame, which are carried to Beyrout. From the roof of the French khan, and afterwards from the mole, we saw distinctly the island of Cyprus away to the north-west, as the evening was beautifully clear. Remembering the distance, I could scarcely believe it was visible from Sidon; but a young merchant of the place who spoke some Italian, and had accosted us on the mole, assured me that in certain states of the atmosphere they could see it clearly at sunrise and sunset. The population is variously stated at from 5000 to 6000, and according to Robinson, it is divided as follows: 'two-thirds of the whole are Moslems, one-eighth Jews, and the remainder Greek Catholics and Maronites.' Since his visit, however, the American Mission has been planted in Sidon, and through Mr Thomson's labours, there is now a Protestant element in the population of the place, which, though not large as yet, serves as a leaven which eventually will, it is to be hoped, leaven the whole lump. As the labours of that mission, greatly blessed of God, have produced wonderful effects in Turkey among the Armenians, while little or no impression has been made on the adherents of the Latin Church, so in Syria the open door seems to be among those of the Greek Church, while little access has been gained to the Maronites, who have submitted to the supremacy of the Pope. Sidon derives its name from its founder Sidon, the son of Canaan.<sup>1</sup> When the Israelites entered

<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Ant. Lib 1, cap. 6.

Canaan, it was known as 'Great Zidon' (Josh. xix. 28), and deserved the title which Tacitus bestowed upon it, 'The mother of the Phœnicians.' From the language of the prophet Isaiah, Tyre, which afterwards eclipsed her, was her daughter (Isaiah xxiii. 12), founded at a later period by a colony of Sidonians. We read of her as one of the oppressors of Israel in the time of the Judges. In after periods, when foreign armies made their appearance in Syria, she shared to a considerable extent the fortunes of her daughter Tyre.

As we returned to our tents, an American gentleman, Mr Ghebard, whom I had first met in Shepherd's hotel at Cairo and afterwards at Jerusalem, rode up and encamped beside us. He likewise had met with some rough treatment at Shiloh. Sleep at night was impossible owing to the flocks of jackals which seemed to form a circle round the tents, and kept up a chorus of the most lugubrious howlings I ever heard. Mr Thomson afterwards told me that in the following spring (1855) a sarcophagus was dug up from underground not far from Sidon, of the same form as the Egyptian tombs of the twenty-sixth dynasty, or sixth century before Christ. It bore on the lid a long inscription in the Phœnician language, executed in the Hebrew character, which he was able to decipher with perfect ease, setting forth that it was the tomb of Armunazar king of Sidon, and giving his titles and his descent for many generations.<sup>1</sup> The discovery is a very valuable one, as it contains more of the ancient Phœnician language than has hitherto been discovered throughout the world.

*March 30.*—Finding they would still be in time for the Austrian steamer which we had seen passing between Akka and Tyre two days before, the Messrs Smith made up their minds to embark in her for Smyrna. So to save breaking up our party till we reached the end of the journey, we all started from Sidon at five in the morning, just as the day began to dawn. Shortly after leaving, the Greek dragoman pointed out to us the road leading to the village of Jouni, where the eccentric Lady Hester Stanhope lived and died. Our path lay along the sea-shore, and in half an hour we reached the Nahr el Auli, the Bostrenus of the ancients, a broad stream, fringed with oleanders, which after rain is quite impassable. Placing our legs on the horses' necks, we had no difficulty in getting through it, though

<sup>1</sup> I believe it is the same tomb which was afterwards purchased by the Duc de Luynes for the museum of the Louvre. Mr Thomson sent a copy of the inscription to Chevalier Bunsen, that it might be published in Germany. I wrote requesting to be favoured with a copy of it, but the letter probably never reached its destination, as I received no reply.

the water reached up to the saddle-girths. Looking back upon Sidon, it had a much grander appearance as seen from the north, in the first rays of the morning sun, than when we approached it from Tyre on the previous day. After a ride of nearly two hours, we came to a high rocky promontory, which separates the Bay of Sidon from that of the Khan Nebi Younas, and from a Khan by the side of the path two Turkish soldiers issued to accompany us across the pass, as they were stationed there to protect travellers from the Druse robbers who frequent it. We crossed the pass without seeing a human being, and managed by a series of slips and leaps to get down once more from the heights on to the sea-beach. A small Mohammedan weli with a khan at its side, marks the place where, according to Mohammedan tradition, the Prophet Jonah was cast ashore from the whale's belly. Were this the only spot which lays claim to that remarkable event, one might be disposed to accept the tradition; but there is another in the neighbourhood of Gaza, and in the bay of Iskanderoun (Alexandretta) I visited a third Weli Nebi Younas, which the inhabitants of those parts at least assert to be the veritable scene of the miracle. The ancient city of Porphyreon is supposed to have stood somewhere in the neighbourhood of the Khan Nebi Younas. As we rode along the shore, we saw the crews of several fishing-boats engaged in drawing their nets to the shore after the fashion of our own fishermen at home. The sun was broiling, and the road, owing to the soft sand, exceedingly wearisome, especially as there was not much in the scenery to divert our attention, saving always Sannín, the highest point of Lebanon, which, capped with snow, formed a striking and noble landmark as seen rising on the other side of the Bay of Beyrout. The Ras el Beyrout, which stretches far into the sea, conceals from travellers approaching from the south all view of the town, which is situated on its northern slope.

At 8.30 we crossed the Nahr ed Damúr, no doubt the ancient Tamyras, which Strabo places between Beyrout and Sidon. It is a fine specimen of the 'streams from Lebanon' (Cant. iv. 15); short, but of great width, deep, muddy, and icy cold. Its banks, like those of the Auli, were fringed with long reeds, and oleander bushes in full flower. Some of the people who live in the neighbourhood were upon the banks waiting to pilot us across the ford. Of the grove of Æsculapius and the town of Leontopolis, which Strabo places in the neighbourhood of this river, there is now not a trace to be seen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Strabo quoted by Reland, p. 433.

About ten minutes after crossing it, we had in sight, on the lowest slope of the hill, about a mile from the shore, a pretty and apparently prosperous village called Marah, where there is an extensive factory for winding silk, that being one of the staple commodities of Lebanon. At 9.30 we reached Khan Khuldah, remarkable on account of the many sarcophagi which lie scattered about on both sides of the path. Some of these I afterwards learned had Phœnician figures cut upon them, but those we examined were perfectly plain. It is evident they have been cut out of the limestone rocks, round the base of which they are now scattered; but it is a question still awaiting the decision of antiquaries, whether there was once a city in the neighbourhood, of which this was the necropolis, or whether this was only a quarry which supplied the ancient Berytus with stone coffins for its defunct aristocracy. Robinson has identified it with the *Mutatio Heldua* of the Jerusalem Itinerary, the first stage on the Roman road south of Beyrout. From thence we took two hours to cross the dreary undulating expanse of red sand which covers the whole of the southern and western sides of the promontory on which Beyrout is situated. Many pretty villages were in view on the sides of the mountain, conspicuous among which was one called Suweifât, occupied entirely by Druses. A thick plantation of stone pines, rather pompously designated 'the Pine Forest,' has been planted to prevent the sand from encroaching on the fertile plain beyond, which is covered with gardens and olive groves to the foot of the mountains. After passing the forest, we turned to the west along a sandy avenue, hemmed in on both sides by hedges of prickly pears, and soon reached the eastern gate of the city, one of the most striking features on the outside of which is the American Protestant church and burying-ground, where the missionary, Pliny Fisk, and Mr Dale of Lynch's expedition, and many of our own soldiers, sailors, and mercantile countrymen repose. A small backshish to the custom-house officers secured the free passage of our baggage when it arrived; and after a ride of six hours and a half from Sidon, we alighted in comfortable quarters at the Hotel de Belle Vue, kept by a Greek named Demetri, just as the inmates were sitting down to lunch. There we found the Tobin party preparing for departure on the following morning for Damascus and Baalbek, and were able to compare notes of our travels and exchange our respective adventures. In passing through the streets we had the good fortune to meet two of the Druse women wearing the *tantour* or horn, which is so celebrated as a part of their head-dress. It was fastened on the forehead, and the long white scarf which covers their shoulders was

thrown over it, adding greatly to their apparent height. It is worn by the Maronite women as well as the Druses; but the Patriarch has issued a bull, enjoining the discontinuance of it among his people, and as it is an ornament which causes great pain to the wearer, it is not improbable that its use may ere long be altogether given up among the inhabitants of the Lebanon.

In the afternoon our baggage arrived, and poor Hanna made his appearance with his face black and blue, and his head swollen to double its ordinary size, from a beating he had got from the brutal mukhari Mahomed, because he had interfered to prevent him from pilfering some trifling article belonging to his Howajee. Shaheen, the other dragomen, and some of the muleteers, though Mohammedans, came to lay a complaint against Mahomed, and to beg I would have him punished, as his treatment of the poor fellow had been shameful. I wrote at once to the British Consul, asking his interference, and called at his office half-a-dozen times next morning; but that gentleman was enjoying the retirement of his villa somewhere out of town, and when at last he made his appearance, instead of seeing me, he sent word by the Vice-Consul that no redress could be had in that quarter. I therefore sent Shaheen with Hanna and those who were willing to go as witnesses to the Cadi, to state the case and demand punishment on the offender. This functionary convicted the mukhari, and ordered that he should be bastinadoed if the master of the injured man insisted on it, thus throwing the responsibility on me. I felt that Mahomed most richly deserved punishment, yet I hesitated to order so cruel an infliction, which would have laid him up for a week; and when the blubbing wretch came entreating mercy, and poor Hanna joined in asking that he might be spared, I contented myself with dismissing him, and withholding from him the backshish which otherwise he should have received. As the way in which business is conducted in these courts is the same throughout all parts of the Turkish empire, a description of a visit paid to the Cadi's Court at Cairo will give the reader some insight into the mode of dispensing justice.

The Mekhémeh, or Cadi's Court at Cairo, is held in the Old Palace of the Sultans, which was built by Saladin. Many people were loitering in the spacious enclosure when we dismounted. A splendid broad staircase leads up from the outer court to the apartments on the first floor, and on it were scattered about a dozen kavasses, some extended at full length asleep upon the steps, others deeply intent on a game of cards. Mounting the stairs without let or hinderance, we found

ourselves in a passage of considerable breadth, filled with suitors whose cases had precedence, and who were in deep and earnest conversation with the clerks of court; because, through their influence, the cases can be either accelerated or retarded indefinitely. It is said that bribery is carried on in a systematic way. His honour does not participate in 'the small gains' derived from petty cases; he flies at higher quarry. Those who have important cases, or have to contend against weighty influence, go directly to him; parties of smaller consideration 'grease the palm' of his effendi; and the men of still lower degree bestow their piastres upon the clerks. Hence the confidential whispers which were passing between some of the litigants and these gentry as we passed along. Our intention, as already stated, was to enter the hall of justice as spectators, and after having satisfied ourselves in seeing and hearing, quietly to retire again; but in this we did not succeed. A kavass immediately stepped forward; and, after a few words exchanged between him and our dragoman, we were ushered into the court—a large room with a divan round three sides of it.

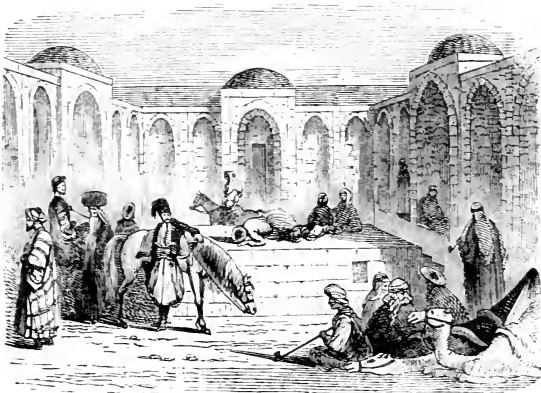
The cadi was not present; but the only occupant of the room, his effendi or secretary, who was seated European fashion at a small table writing, immediately rose and did the honours, making various saláms, which we did our best to imitate; after which we seated ourselves on the divan according to invitation. The dragoman then began, in approved showman style, a long recital to the effendi, showing that his Howajees were two Frank gentlemen, subjects of the Queen of England; the one an Indian nabob, the other a priest, who had come to pay their respects to his honour the cadi, and to witness the administration of justice in his court, etc., etc. Then followed new saláms from the effendi, and awkward attempts on our part to return them, which ended, I believe, in our rising at last, and bowing in good English fashion. A kavass was despatched to inform the cadi, who had retired into his haréem, of the honour awaiting him; and forthwith a venerable gentleman, with large turban, flowing silk robes, and a fine white beard, made his appearance. Fresh saláms on either side; and as my readers may wish to know how these are performed, I shall here mention the *theory*, begging it to be understood that the *practice* is regulated by etiquette; and that the appreciation of a man's rank is shown by the number of movements in a Turk or Arab's salám, just as distinctly as it is in some of the more aristocratic circles in our country by a nod or a bow, by shaking hands with a couple of fingers or with the full complement of digits. The first movement is to lower the hand below the knee, as if you intended to

touch the ground with the back of it ; then raising it, to touch successively your breast, your mouth, and your forehead. When all these movements are performed, the salutation is most respectful ;—it indicates that you prostrate yourselves in the very dust before the person so saluted. As I have intimated, however, the *salám* sometimes consists in bringing the hand to the breast only, sometimes to the breast and mouth ; and if, in exchanging civilities, you would give only what you get, you must not only be aware of all this, but also keep a sharp eye on the movements of your *vis-a-vis* to see how much of the ceremonial he goes through.

The *cadi*, when all these civilities were ended, doubled himself up on his *divan*, supported by cushions, and began to play with his beads, while the *dragoman* for a third time told his tale respecting the *Frangees*. Pipes and coffee made their appearance immediately ; and after he had addressed a few questions to us, he signified his pleasure that the next party on the roll should be called, and the case was heard while he and we were puffing away merrily. A poor Arab woman barefoot, dressed in the long blue shift and veil, and wearing the *yashmak*, appeared accompanied by two soldiers. She was a soldier's widow, and came to have his death legally established, that she might recover some miserable arrears of pay due to him. Her witnesses deponed to the fact, that she was his wife, that they had seen him on his death-bed, and had assisted in burying him ; upon which the *cadi* decided in her favour, the *effendi* took a note of the judgment, and the parties retired. The next case called was that of a buxom Levantine, dressed gaily in silks, with a black silk veil worn mantilla fashion on her head, but whose features were also concealed by a *yashmak*. We had remarked her in the lobby, not only from her superior attire, but from the feverish activity of her movements, and the earnestness with which she accosted the various clerks. Her suit was for divorce from her husband for alleged cruelty and misconduct, though we were privately informed she only waited a favourable decision to bestow her charms on another. She was destined, however, to endure 'hope deferred ;' her husband was not present when called, and the case could not be decided in his absence. In the most courteous manner possible, the *cadi* caused our *dragoman* to explain these cases to us as they proceeded ; and after having had this specimen of the procedure of the high court of justice, we conveyed our thanks through our mouth-piece, made our parting *saláms* to his honour, gave a separate backshish to his pipe-bearer, coffee-maker, *kavass*, etc., and so retired.



Mr Ernst, of the house of Duchêne Ernst and Co., whom I had known when a resident in Leghorn, was most kind in providing horses and mules in room of those I had dismissed; and as I learned that the next steamer was to sail for Smyrna in ten days, I resolved to set out for Damascus without further loss of time than the one day required for making these arrangements. I regretted much the departure of the Messrs Smith, as they were most intelligent and agreeable companions, and truly Christian men; but Mr Fletcher resolved to accompany me, and our party was completed by the agreeable addition of Mr Ghebard, as frank, leal-hearted, and kind a companion as one could desire to meet. As we had all made up our minds to start by the next steamer for Smyrna, we had a common object in view, viz., to get a peep at the venerable Eshsham and the far-famed Baalbek, and to be back in time for embarkation.



Eastern Khan or Caravanserai.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## LEBANON AND DAMASCUS.

1st April.—With the exception of the Sunday we spent in Nazareth, when it poured nearly all day, we had been fortunate enough to enjoy lovely weather during all the journey from Jerusalem, and when we rose this morning, there seemed fair prospect of its continuance. During breakfast, however, while our tents and luggage were being packed, a tremendous shower of hail and rain came on, which lasted for an hour. When at length we mounted, Demetri shook his head, and expressed his fear of bad weather in the mountains; but as the day had become bright again, and the mountains cloudless, we set this warning down as an innkeeper's croaking to retain departing customers. At 9.30 we left the gate of the town; and following the lane by which we had approached it two days before—now the bed of a rapid stream, we passed first through the pine forest, and then among olive yards and gardens of fig trees and mulberries, until, in an hour from the time of leaving, we began the ascent of Lebanon by a narrow, rugged bridle path, which winds up the limestone rocks. Yet this is the great high road between Damascus and the sea, and all merchandise for embarkation, or for the interior, has to be conveyed by it across the mountain. At noon we reached Khan El Jambúr, with a large birket or reservoir in front of it, the first of a series of refuges placed at intervals along the path over the whole mountain. The view becomes much grander and more interesting after leaving it, especially towards the north. A change occurs here in the geological structure of the mountain, for a belt of red sand-stone runs across it from north to south, which it took us more than an hour to cross. About half an hour beyond the khan, there is a pass in the sandstone belt, so steep that our saddle horses clambered up with great difficulty, while the muleteers had to put their shoulders to the load in order to get the mules along. This ladder surmounted, we looked down into a deep and picturesque wadi on the right, called Wadi Sharúr, which

we were told runs past the Druse village of Suweifát, which we had observed on our way from Sidon. A zig-zag road, over the stoniest ground I had yet met with in that pre-eminently stony region brought us at two o'clock to another khan called El Kaháleh, where we halted for half an hour for lunch. From hence there is a most magnificent view, not only towards the Plain of Beyrout and the sea, but likewise to the north-east, into a wild romantic valley, bounded by steep perpendicular rocks, crowned with the firs of Lebanon. It is called Wadi Hummána, and through it the stream known as the river of Beyrout runs to the sea. The day had now become overcast, and a Levantine merchant with his family, whom we had overtaken in our zig-zag path, resolved to make good his quarters at this khan, as he feared the approach of rain; but we determined, as it was yet early, to push on farther, and take our chance of a shower. On leaving Khan Kaháleh, the mountain-side for some distance was planted with vines, which were all trained along the ground as in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem, beyond which we surmounted a ridge of rocks, and arrived at Khan Hussein in a small mountain glen, where our dragomen were all anxious we should pass the night. It was only four o'clock, and the ground round the khan so damp for pitching tents, that we resolved to advance, hoping for better luck at Khan Ruweisát el Khamer, which was about an hour and a half higher up. We soon got to the edge of a very deep valley, on the heights at the opposite side of which lies the pretty village of Bhamdún. Into this valley we descended, and after having toiled up to its head, another half hour brought us to Khan Ruweisát. A cold mist had been drifting down the sides of the hills for some time, and just before we reached our night quarters the rain began. A more dreary place to halt at can scarcely be conceived. As regards the khan, every stage we had made realised the proverb, 'out of the frying-pan into the fire;' for each succeeding one had been more miserable than its predecessor, until we seemed to have reached the *ne plus ultra* in a hut more comfortless and poverty-stricken than any Highland bothy or Irish shieling I ever saw. Mr Fletcher wisely betook himself at once to its shelter, miserable as it was; Mr Ghebard and I gave orders to have our tents pitched, but before the work was half done, both they and we were well drenched. As the ground was not level, I wrought hard to dig a trench round the side of the tent next the road, from which a stream was already beginning to descend upon it, but all to no purpose. In half an hour there was a river three inches deep running through the tent, and after sitting for a

while on my bed, with my feet upon a camp-stool, considering which was the least of two evils, I made a bolt for the khan, taking bed and bedding along with me, and leaving the tent with the rest of its contents to its fate. Mr Ghebard got into bed at once, and braved the flood till next morning.

Apropos of this rustic khan, I may here describe the ordinary City Khan of the East. It serves at once as an inn and magazine to the merchant. When his caravan arrives, the laden camels enter through the deep porchway into a large paved quadrangular court, round which there are chambers, lighted only by the opening of the door which gives access to them. These chambers serve as stores, and the merchant takes one or two, according to the amount of his merchandise. The key, which is simply a bit of wood with a few nails fixed in a particular manner, so as to fit into the chambers of a wooden latch within, is delivered over to him; and his customers come to the khan at certain times when he is at home to inspect his goods. A wooden gallery runs round the whole court of the khan at the level of the first floor, the access to which is by a wooden staircase outside; and from this gallery doors open upon vaulted chambers, similar in every respect to those on the ground-floor, except that they are free from damp. One of these upper chambers is the merchant's lodging, the keys of his stores beneath, the carpet on which he stretches himself for sleep (for an Eastern never seems to dream of undressing), and all the rest of his *personelle* is deposited here; and away he goes to visit his correspondents, to steam in the bath, or to smoke and play dominoes at the café, with the cumbersome wooden key of his own chamber thrust into his girdle, or carried as a plaything in one hand, while a row of beads forms an inseparable accompaniment in the other. This string of beads is carried by all Mohammedans, not apparently as a matter of devotion, but to give employment to their hands when otherwise disengaged. A Romish priest once assured me that the rosary was not originally among the sacred things of his Church, but that it had been imported by the Easterns, and was sanctified and 'set apart from a common to a holy use,' as we know a host of other Pagan articles and ceremonies were by the Church of Rome. I give the statement as it was made to me by a respectable and liberal priest many years ago; the nature of my avocations, and my residence in a foreign country, have prevented me from ever verifying the truth of the statement by my own researches.

The Khan Ruweisât may serve as a fair specimen of the country khans. Imagine a hut about 25 feet long, 16 feet wide, and 7 feet

high, built without mortar of the undressed boulders lying around, but daubed on the inside with clay, and having a flat roof made of fir branches, covered with two or three layers of mud; the trunks, just as they were felled, forming the rafters. A small portico, covered by the roof, but open in front, gave access to four pigeon-holes without window or opening of any kind but the door, the largest of which might be about ten feet square. The floor was the bare earth with all its natural inequalities, just as when first enclosed. A Turkish colonel, with half a dozen soldiers, had arrived from Damascus in charge of several mules laden with gun-stocks a few minutes before us, and had appropriated the largest room for a barrack. The one next it, in the middle of the tenement, was occupied by the khanjee and his family; so Mr Fletcher and I took possession of the other two, and had our beds put up in them, while the dragomen and mule-teers made shift as best they could in the open portico. The mud roof proved but a slight protection, and the rain percolated through it so abundantly, that I was obliged once more to fix my umbrella to my bed-head to avoid being kept awake by a continual dripping on my face. I was lulled to sleep by the monotonous plash on umbrella and Mackintosh-sheet, but ere long was disturbed by a rumbling noise, which I fancied at first was an earthquake, as it made the whole tenement shake. This was occasioned, I afterwards found, by the khanjee dressing the roof. I had seen during the day on the flat mud roofs of many of the houses we passed a stone roller, the use of which I did not at the time comprehend. When the mud had become so completely saturated with water, that the dropping disturbed mine host's slumbers, he issued forth amid all the rain, and mounting some stone steps projecting from the gable of the house outside,<sup>1</sup> began to trundle the roller backward and forward along the roof until the mud had acquired a sufficient compactness of surface to resist for another hour or two the lashings of the sleet and rain, when the operation was again repeated.

Next morning (*April 2*), the ground was covered two feet deep with snow, which was still falling so thick that we could scarcely see the stable thirty feet distant on the opposite side of the yard. As there was no prospect of its soon clearing, the colonel and his men set out for the village of Bhamdún three miles off, to establish themselves in more

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the many instances in which I saw the meaning of the Saviour's exhortation illustrated, 'Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take anything out of his house.'—*Matt. xxiv. 17.*

comfortable quarters. Our dragomen wished us to follow their example, but we preferred remaining where we were to the certainty of being drenched before the village could be reached; and sent off one of the muleteers to procure a supply of charcoal, without which we must have perished from the extreme cold. Meanwhile, Mr Ghebard having deserted his tent, we took possession of the largest room, had our beds put up in it, the door barricaded to keep out the cold, candles lighted, and a pan of charcoal set upon the floor, around which we crowded; and thus passed one of the most miserable Sabbaths I ever spent. We were enveloped in thick fog all day, with the exception of two brief intervals, when our wretchedness was increased by seeing Beyrout far down below us glittering in sunshine. Monday morning (*April 3*) brought no abatement of the storm; and we had the pleasant prospect of another day's confinement in this horrible den. Early on Sunday morning some passer-by had reported that the Tobin party were similarly storm-stayed on the other side of the mountain, and that a whole family had perished somewhere by the roadside in the snow; but since then not a living soul had approached the khan from either side. About two o'clock the snow ceased for a short time, and we gave our mukharis orders to pack up and move on to the next khan; but they declared that with such a depth of snow it was impossible to travel, and sturdily refused to move a step. Upon this, Mr Fletcher resolved to return to Beyrout, and soon left us; but, as Mr Ghebard and I had no mind to forego our visit to Damascus without a further trial, we kept to our wretched quarters, on the chance that next day might prove more propitious, though, to confess the truth, we scarcely ventured to hope it, when the snow-storm recommenced as violently as ever, after the brief interval of a couple of hours. During these two days the khanjee had hard work with his roller overhead.

*April 4.*—‘*Neve forte forte ancora Signore!*’ was the pleasant announcement with which Shaheen greeted us, when he shuffled into our barn on the third morning of our imprisonment. ‘What is to be done, Mr Ghebard,’ I inquired; ‘will you stand this for another day, or must we also return to Beyrout to be laughed at?’ ‘I would feel very bad,’ said my companion, ‘to think afterwards that I had left Syria without seeing Damascus, and all along of a snow-storm, so I vote we stay till after mid-day at least. It may clear before that time!’ So it was arranged, for I was quite of the same mind; and as we could keep up the caloric better in bed than out of it, now the khanjee’s store of charcoal was exhausted, it was nine o’clock before

we got to breakfast. We had scarcely sat down to it when the dull tramp of horses' feet in the snow was heard approaching, and rushing out to know what new thing was stirring, we found the Postjee at the door, accompanied by a solitary traveller, well wrapped in shawls and bournouse. They had left Beyrout at daybreak, and had enjoyed beautiful weather till within half an hour of Khan Kaháleh below. The snow had ceased falling, and a little patch of blue sky was seen, leading us to hope that the storm was nearly spent; but, as the snow lay rather more than three feet deep on the ground, we asked Postjee if he intended putting up at our distinguished caravanserai for the rest of the day? '*La Wullah,*' was the reply; 'the letter-bags must go to Sham and Haleb, if it is possible to force a way.' Bravo Postjee! and does the Howajee propose to accompany you over the mountain? '*Eiva*' (yes), was the brief reply, as he dismounted to get a glass of raki. '*Taieb kateir taieb*' ('good, very good'), was our rejoinder; 'don't go too fast, and we will overtake you at the next khan.' All was bustle and preparation now. The mukharis still refused to move a step; besides, the tents stood dripping under a ton weight of snow, so that the idea of travelling with our cumbrous equipages was out of the question; and it was resolved that, with a small carpet-bag strapped to the back of our saddles, and with such supplies as our dragomen could carry in their saddle-bags, we should make an attempt to reach the famed old Syrian capital. My fellow-traveller had the advantage of me for once in being carried by contract, for on his dragoman devolved all the bother of arranging with his múkharis. I left all my belongings in charge of the trusty Abyssinian, with orders to take them back the same day to Beyrout; and he was the bearer of a note to Mr Ernst, requesting him to settle with the múkharis. By ten o'clock we were once more in our saddles, but the leaden clouds and gathering mist warned us that we must still, in nautical parlance, 'look out for squalls.' Following the tracks of the Postjee's horses we got on tolerably well for an hour, till we reached Khan Ain Sufar; but, after passing it, a slushy snow began to fall, which, driven by the wind into our faces, nearly blinded us; while it lay so deep in a steep pass through which we had to clamber, that more than one of our horses got immoveably fixed in it, and the girths of Shaheen's saddle breaking at the steepest part he performed an elegant somersault over the tail of his charger, carrying my *Leháf* and saddle-bags with him.

At one o'clock we reached Khan Modeirej, situated in a deep narrow dell in the middle of the mountain, and there overtook the

Postjee and his companion. When asked whether he still meant to proceed, he answered in the affirmative, but told us that it was impossible to do so without a guide, and that we must pay for one as far as the next khan. The logic of this speech was not very apparent; but with snow already nearly four feet deep on the ground, and deeper still higher up, with fresh supplies descending from the inky clouds, and a heavy wet mist scudding along with the wind, we felt that to take a guide from this khan, well acquainted with the summit of the mountain which we were now to cross, was a wise precaution; so we told the *Maitre de poste* to select his man, and get under weigh as soon as possible. For half an hour after leaving Khan Modeirej the road was dreadful, and several of the horses fell; indeed, on returning a week afterwards, we could scarcely believe it possible that, with snow so deep, the horses could have made their way along so execrable a road. That, however, was but the beginning of our trials. As we advanced to the regions where the snow of the previous winter still lay unmelted, the depth varied from six to eight feet, and, though being frozen it bore pretty well, we came occasionally upon a fresh wreath in which our horses sunk to the shoulders, or to a ledge of rock, where, missing their footing, they rolled over with us, burying us so deep as sometimes to threaten suffocation. At last the newly-fallen snow became so deep that we were all obliged to dismount, and drag the poor beasts after us. Our situation had now become one of considerable danger; the mist had settled down so thick around us that it was impossible to see beyond thirty feet in any direction; we had already taken four hours to what ought to have been done in two, and our guide, after confessing that we had wandered from the path, announced his determination to return whence he came, and, without more ado, turned his horse's head. We were in circumstances which admitted of no trifling, and Mr Ghebard, pulling out his revolver, told him that if he attempted to escape he would shoot him dead on the spot, which brought him to his senses. Notwithstanding all danger, and fatigue from wading in the snow, it was impossible to refrain from laughing at Shaheen. His wide petticoat trousers had accumulated an amount of congealed snow that added greatly to his toilsome wading, and gave him the appearance of a sugar mannikin on a marriage cake; but, from the moment the guide announced he had lost his way, my factotum took leave at once of his courage and his senses and began to weep like a child and curse like a pagan. 'Signore, Signore, what am I to do? I have a wife and children in Cairo; I won't die here in the snow.' Like Byron's shipwrecked carpenter—



‘He, poor fellow, had a wife and children ;  
Two things for dying people quite bewildering.’

‘Coraggio Shaheen, coraggio, non c’è pericolo. Stia di buon cuore!’  
‘A whole family died in the snow two days ago, and I won’t die for a cursed Christian,’ was the reply ; and in this way he went on till we reached the khan. The mist lifted a little for about a minute, and enabled the guide to take his bearings ; and soon we became sensible, by the rush of water to the eastward, that we had passed the summit of Lebanon. A steep descent followed, in which both riders and horses rolled together in the snow ; and we came in sight of Khan Murád after a five hours’ journey from Khan Modeirej. We had looked forward to the comfort of drying our wet things at a fire if we reached the khan in safety, but no such luxury was in store for us. Every particle of wood and charcoal had been consumed by those who had gone before, except what would serve to make us a cup of coffee ; so there was nothing for it but to lie down wet as we were, and try to retain what caloric we still possessed in our bodies by wrapping the damp rugs and bernouses closely round us. One must be placed in similar circumstances to know what a comfort the *chibouk* is !

*April 5.*—The Shepherd of Israel, who had preserved us from the danger we ran of perishing in the mist and snow on the top of the mountain, protected us also from the ague fever we anticipated as the result of sleeping in our wet clothes, and by seven o’clock we were again on horseback, with a bright sun overhead, which made the glare from the snow most painful to the eyes. We rode along the edge of a deep ravine which runs down into the plain, and in an hour had cleared the snow. The descent on the eastern side of Lebanon is much steeper and shorter than on the other ; and, as we proceeded, the broad fertile plain of Cœle-Syria, now called Buká’a, opened up to us. The Litani had overflowed its banks, and nearly one-half of the lower part of the plain was under water. On the eastern side of it, the range of Anti-Libanus runs parallel to the chain of Lebanon we were then crossing, and ends in Mount Hermon, the snowy shroud of which sparkled with all the brilliancy of a diamond in the morning sun. For beauty of shape and grandeur of position it eclipses in my estimation Mount Blanc, especially as seen from the south, for it rises from a comparatively level country, like a mighty rampart, stemming the onward march of the endless mountains behind it towards Gilead and Palestine ; and nothing equal to it in height is to be met with to the south until the traveller sights the frowning crags of Mount Hor, or the granite chain of Horeb. Yet lovely and imposing as it is in appear-

ance, no British 'jail bird' could boast a greater number of *aliases* than Ghebel esh Sheikh has borne. By the Sidonians it was called Sirion; by the Amorites, Shenir, probably from a town or district of the same name at its base (Deut. iii. 9, compared with 1 Chron. v. 23); by the Jews, Hermon and Sion (Deut. iv. 48); and by the present inhabitants of the land, Ghebel esh Sheikh. The royal Psalmist applies to it both its Hebrew names in Psalm cxxxiii. 3: 'As the dew of Hermon, that descended upon the mountains of Zion;' and were it not that in Deut. iv. 48 Sion is stated to be identical with Hermon, we should be led by his language to suppose that the latter was the general name for the chain of Anti-Lebanon.

At nine o'clock we reached Khan Mouraijat, where we were detained for a short time owing to one of the horses having cast a shoe. We found that the Tobin family had been storm-stayed in it for a couple of days; and if it is any relief to a man's own discomfort to know that his friends are not a whit better off, a hasty inspection of the place brought ample assurance that they must have endured nearly as much misery as ourselves. On leaving the khan, instead of keeping to the regular mule path, we struck right down upon the village of Mekseh, which lay at the base of the mountain, and began at ten o'clock our journey across the plain, which was very similar to the one already described across the Merj el Ghurúk. A picturesque object in the landscape to the south of Mekseh is a ruined castle, once the residence of some of the Emirs of Lebanon, standing on a projecting crag several hundred feet above the level of the plain, with the village of Kubb Elias lying at its base. At 11.20 we reached the banks of the Litani, and crossed it by a bridge, the access to which we had some difficulty in finding, as the whole country for a quarter of a mile along its banks was under water. A khan stands on the opposite side, which was completely surrounded with water, as also the mound on which the village of Merj stands, about three minutes to the right of the road. Opposite it, but some distance to the north of our path, there was another village perched on a similar mound, which Mr Ghebard's dragoman called Bir Elias. He was well acquainted with this plain, having passed many years in it fishing for leeches, with which he said its waters abound. A ride of about forty minutes from the Litani brought us to another swollen river, which takes its rise at a place called Anjar, among some green *tells* at the foot of Anti-Libanus, about an hour distant, and falls into the Litani below the village of Merj. I have since found, from Mr Porter's most interesting work, that some ruins we observed there are the remains of the ancient

Chalcis, once the capital of Ituræa.<sup>1</sup> In a line with these *tells*, a chain of low hills runs along to the south of the Damascus road, on which is situated a pretty village named Mejdél, in the vicinity of the ruins of an ancient temple.

We reached the northern point of this chain at one o'clock, and immediately turned to the south, traversing diagonally a wadi which separates it from the western range of Anti-Libanus, and in half an hour had entered the Wadi Harîr, which runs pretty nearly east for an hour and a half. It is thickly wooded with dwarf oak, hawthorn, and other bushes, and must be very beautiful in spring when they are covered with fresh green foliage; but when we passed it was dreary enough, as the snow lay thick on the ground, and the wind rustled through the withered leaves of autumn which still clung to the oak branches. We met several Khurdish shepherds with their flocks during our progress through it. They always march in front, and the sheep follow them; and if any stray, instead of sending dogs after them as with us, they call to them until they return to the flock. This was no novelty to me, as all the Italian shepherds do the same; but occurring in that land, it was a most interesting illustration of the Saviour's parable of the Good Shepherd.—John x. The mountains of Anti-Libanus are divided into two parallel chains, with a series of valleys lying between them, and having made our way through the first chain by the Wadi Harîr, we turned again to the south, traversing diagonally a broad uncultivated swampy valley called Wadi Jedeideh, in the middle of which we found an army of vultures preying upon a horse very recently dead. The mountains on the eastern side of this valley were much higher than those through which we had already passed. At four o'clock we entered Wadi el Kurn—'Valley of the Horn'—a narrow and most picturesque pass leading through the eastern chain of Anti-Libanus. Its bed was completely occupied by an impetuous stream, which we crossed a dozen times on our way, in order to avoid projecting rocks, or to get upon the path where it became visible above water. This ravine, with its walls of rock rising precipitously on either side, and overhanging trees, presents by far the finest scenery to be met with on the direct road between Beyrout and Damascus. After we had followed it for an hour, the pass opens into a valley to the north-east, in which direction the river runs till it falls into the Barada; and crossing it for the last time, we scrambled to the top of a steep barren hill, where we had another glorious view of

<sup>1</sup> Rev. J. L. Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*, vol. i. p. 15.

Hermon, apparently not many hours distant. By the time we reached a spring called Ain Methelún, in the valley beyond, it was almost dark, and we had still an hour's ride before us to the village where we were to sleep. We entered another pass, which in the uncertain light seemed nearly as wild as that of El Kurn, and like it, was flooded by a broad deep river, which we had not only to cross several times, but down the course of which we had to ride some distance up to the saddle-girths in water. Leaving it at last to the right we surmounted another hill, and in the darkness narrowly escaped riding over the roofs of some houses belonging to the village of Demás, which were level with the path. Wet, weary, and hungry, we arrived at seven o'clock, but were obliged to remain for a quarter of an hour shivering in the cold night air, while the dragomen ran from house to house to procure a lodging, as the people seemed unwilling to take us in. At length we made good our quarters in a nice whitewashed room, the mud-built divan of which was raised about a couple of feet above the ground, and occupied the whole apartment, except three feet within the door, which served as a passage to a byre within. It was a paradise, after the filthy khans in which we had passed the five previous nights. A fire was soon blazing on the hearth, our wet bedding and clothes were hung up round it to dry, and we could afford to laugh over our adventures on Lebanon, now that no more mountains intervened between us and the city we had such a desire to visit. While we waited for the evening meal, the two daughters of the host, and a neighbour who professed himself a Christian, though Shaheen maintained he was a Mussulman, sat down beside us, to make a study of the first live specimens of the genus *Giaour* they had probably ever been within hail of. Such curiosity as they displayed I never witnessed, except in children. They examined our watches, pistols, note-books, knives and forks, and would fain have ransacked our carpet-bags too, all three asking explanations in the same breath. I am not sure whether our bare heads, as we cast aside our hats, or the use we made of our knives and forks when supper appeared, excited the merriest peals of laughter. Having given them due time to satisfy their curiosity, we desired Shaheen to request them to retire, as we wished to get to sleep; and though the fleas were somewhat troublesome, we managed to pass a tolerable night.

*April 6.*—Having bestowed a backshish on our host, we left Demás at 7.30, and rode over sweeping valleys and bare limestone hills for an hour and three quarters, till we reached Khan el Aurat, where a beautiful stream rushes out from beneath the hill, and runs north-

east to join the Barada. A somewhat steep ascent from this khan, during which we had another view of Hermon to the south-south-west, and of the village of Dummar to the north-east, prettily situated among gardens on the banks of the Barada, the ancient Abana—we entered on a vast sterile plain called Es Sahra, which it took us nearly two hours to traverse. There was nothing to be seen along the whole route but skeletons or half-eaten carcasses of camels and horses that had died in harness, and been devoured where they fell. I counted no less than 100 of them between Demás and esh Shám. The excessive sterility of this elevated tract of country adds greatly by contrast to the effect produced when, on ascending another chalky ridge at its eastern end, the fertile plain of Damascus,<sup>1</sup> and the city with its domes and minarets, surrounded by gardens and groves of trees, bursts at once upon the view. The magical effect it is calculated to produce upon an inhabitant of the southern Desert can be easily conceived, for in the eyes of such it must appear a perfect paradise. On a white chalky crag a little to the left there is a small weli by the side of the road leading to Dummar, from which the finest view of Damascus is said to be obtained; but after visiting both, I prefer that from the heights which terminate Es Sahra, because it embraces the plain to the north of the city, which is in great measure shut out from the other by the high hills immediately behind the village of Salahiyeh. Before us, far as the eye could reach, rose the mountains on the borders of the eastern Desert, towards the confines of Mesopotamia; to the south, those of the Hauran, in ancient days the Hills of Bashan; with Hermon to the south-west. The city, with the groves around it, as seen from these heights, resembled exactly in shape—forgive so lugubrious a simile—a gigantic green coffin studded with silver ornaments, while the Great Mosque looked like a crown placed upon the breast. Its greatest breadth is from east to west across the shoulders, while a long narrow suburb tapers away to the south. At some distance beyond lies a village of considerable size called Darheiyah, and still farther to the south runs the river Awaj, the ancient Pharphar, which takes its rise on Hermon, and empties itself into a lake near the eastern hills already mentioned called Buharet Hijanéh. At length, with deep emotion, I gazed on the oldest city now existing in the world, which still maintains its right to such an appellation. From thence came Eliezer, the servant of

<sup>1</sup> Mr Porter states the elevation of the Plain of Damascus to be 2200 feet above the sea.

Abraham (Gen. xv. 2); in it Benhadad, Hazael, Rezin, the sworn foes of Israel, held their court; and the little Hebrew maid pined in captivity, longing for her native land, where God's Prophet dwelt. To the student of Scripture its name recalls the history of the leprosy-stricken Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, and the pride he felt in Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus (2 Kings v. 1, 2, 12); and it enables one to picture the visit of the Prophet Elisha to the idolatrous city, and the royal presents bestowed on him by its invalid king.—2 Kings viii. 7. But gazing on that rich green plain to the south-west, through which the road from Jordan approaches the city, a scene of infinitely deeper interest than any of these arose before my mind. There the persecutor was arrested in his course by a sight of the dazzling glory of the ascended Saviour, and by the testimony which he bore, as the Head of His Church, that 'in all their afflictions He was afflicted;' 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.' There the talents and energies of one of the most remarkable men that ever lived were consecrated to 'the preaching of the faith which once he destroyed.'—Acts ix.

We descended by a steep zigzag road to the plain, passed the little village of Mezzeh, with its custom-house, at eleven o'clock, and immediately entered an avenue lined with orchards and gardens, well watered by small canals from the Barada in all directions, and gaily decked in pink from the blossoms of the almond tree. Walls similar to those in the neighbourhood of Lyons at the present day, and to those also of ancient Nineveh, made of large square blocks of sundried clay laid on the top of one another, and cemented with mud, protected these orchards from the depredations of wayfarers. A large proportion of the houses in the town are built of the same material. Half an hour brought us to the western gate of the city, and riding through 'the street called Straight,' one-half of which is used as a bazaar, we dismounted at noon at the Hôtel de Palmyre, kept by a Syrian, not very far from the eastern wall of the city. It is a fine specimen of one of the far-famed houses of Damascus. The outside promised miserably, as we entered a low doorway and followed a dark winding passage; but this ushered us into a large quadrangular court, with a fine fountain playing in the midst of orange trees, from which the rooms opened. The one which fell to our lot was large enough to have served an Oxford College for chapel or hall, with marble floor, roof and walls painted with arabesque designs glittering with gilding, and a small marble fountain murmuring in the middle. Our humble toilet over, we set out to wander through the town, and make the best

possible use of our time, which had been sadly curtailed by a forced residence of so many days on Lebanon. I have no intention of entering into details, as Damascus has been often described by previous travellers; and again, since my visit, with an experience and accuracy which leaves nothing more to be desired, by the Rev. J. Porter, the able and learned missionary of the Irish Presbyterian Church, resident in that city, to whose work I refer my readers for the latest and most interesting details concerning Damascus and its neighbourhood. I went to call on him shortly after my arrival, and had pleasure in renewing my acquaintance with Mrs Porter, the daughter of the venerable Dr Cook of Belfast. In her Miss Chesney also found an old friend, and in their hospitable mansion we both spent pleasantly a portion of the two evenings I remained in Damascus. Mr Robson was in Ireland at the time of my visit; but I had the pleasure of meeting the Rev. Mr Barnett, an American missionary, who is associated with the Irish brethren in their work, and from him, as well as from Mr Porter, I derived much valuable topographical information. The success of the mission has been very encouraging, considering that more than one change has taken place in the staff since its establishment about thirteen years ago. Besides preaching in Arabic to a congregation of native converts every Sabbath, they have a flourishing school, in which they hope to train up young men, natives of the country, for the work of the ministry among their countrymen. In this institution they labour in turn for a certain number of hours every day. Their attention is also devoted to the Jewish population, though there as elsewhere, I believe, the fruit of their labours is seen more among the Gentiles than the seed of Abraham.

It may be remembered that some years ago a Franciscan monk called Padre Tommaso and his servant were found murdered in Damascus, and the murder was immediately attributed to the Jews, from an impression entertained both by the Mohammedans and ignorant Christians that they require human blood for the right celebration of their passover. A most frightful persecution arose against the Jews of Damascus in consequence, during which some of the wealthiest members of their community were tortured to death. A curious pamphlet, detailing the whole proceedings in the case, was given me while there; and I was thunder-struck during dinner at the hotel to find the host, and an odd old fellow, who acts as *laquais de place* and dealer in Damascus blades, coins, and other curiosities, declare with the most solemn protestations their entire belief in the guilt of the poor Israelites. 'Surely,' I said, 'you are not fools enough to

believe that the Jews use human blood in their worship. Don't you know that the Law of Moses, which they reverence, forbids that?' 'Yes,' they replied, 'Padre Tommaso was murdered for no other purpose; and every pasqua they murder a child that they may procure blood.' Like the police plots we hear of from time to time in certain despotic states of Europe, there is strong ground to believe that the murder and accusation both had their origin in high quarters, where it was found convenient and necessary to 'sponge' the rich Jews.

Taking a guide, Mr Ghebard and I set out to visit the bazaars; but amidst the labyrinth of streets and alleys I soon lost reckoning of the direction in which we moved. Each trade has its own bazaar. These bazaars are public thoroughfares, with multitudes of small recesses on either side, from twelve to fifteen feet in width, perfectly open to the street in front, and filled with rows of shelves round the other three sides. The floor is a couple of feet above the level of the ground, and on it the owner is seated, Turkish fashion, most probably with chibouk or narghiléh in his mouth, waiting patiently till the goods he has exposed to view catch the attention of some passer-by. He then invites you to coil yourself up *more suo*, like a tailor on his board, and to take a more minute inspection. If he sees that you are likely to become a purchaser, a clap with his hands brings to his side the neighbouring coffee-house keeper, and forthwith you are presented with a chibouk and a *fingán* of coffee without milk or sugar, and of the consistency of liquid mud. The driving of a bargain is a matter of no small skill. The Arab begins by asking a fancy price, and the adept in their ways of doing business replies by offering one as ridiculously low. A few whiffs from the chibouk, and there is an infinitesimal approach on both sides, with an assurance that neither can yield further—silence and smoke—a renewed palaver, in which the prophet's head and beard and marrow-bones are obsecrated in turn. Another offer from the would-be-purchaser—positively his last; upon which the shopkeeper flings the article furiously to the back of his shop, intimating that he will not be trifled with. The customer puts down his chibouk and prepares to be off; but this does not suit the merchant's purpose, so he dexterously interposes by begging his inspection of some other article before he goes, and for a time the object in dispute is left unnoticed. The same diplomatic game is played several times, the bystanders frequently offering their opinions from the street. Like a moth narrowing its circle round the candle, each round brings the combatants nearer the true price, until the shopkeeper sees that



not another para is to be had, when he shoves the scarf or shawl, or whatever the article may be, into the buyer's hand, with the air of a man victimized; the other protesting as loudly the while that he has been *jewed*, and that it is a dear bargain. To the Arabs this is as good and as exciting as a game of chess; and an hour or more is often consumed in such chaffering. How often after looking on at such an operation, and observing the intense satisfaction of the departing purchaser, have the words of Solomon come to my mind,—‘It is naught, it is naught, saith the buyer; but when he is gone his way, then he boasteth.’ Of the bazaars in Damascus, the goldsmiths, the silk, the old arms, and the dried fruits, were the most interesting. From the latter we entered through a lofty and splendid gateway one of the finest khans in Damascus, that of Assad Pasha, where the merchants keep their stores and do business. Its roof is composed of a number of small domes supported on massive pillars, consisting of alternate layers of black basalt and the common limestone of the country, which might most easily be mistaken for marble, and reminded me strongly in appearance of the pillars in the *Duomo* at Genoa. A gallery runs all round the quadrangle, on which open little gloomy cells full of merchandise, the proprietors of which, standing at the doors, noisily solicited our custom. There are many such establishments in Damascus, and each has its coffee-house keeper and its *chiboukjee*. Near this khan we obtained an entrance into the court of the finest house of Damascus, built by Ali Aga, who held the office of secretary to the treasury to Ibrahim Pasha, and was beheaded by him under suspicion of treachery. The public apartments enter from the court, which was full of orange trees and other shrubs. The ceilings of two or three of these, to which we were admitted, were most elaborately painted and perfectly gorgeous with gilding. Rich Turkey carpets were laid on the floors and divans; but like the eastern houses generally, they were otherwise entirely devoid of furniture. There was an inner court similarly arranged, the apartments of which we were told were still more splendid; but they belonged to the *Harém*, and strangers could not be admitted there without warning. To our surprise, however, the servant who attended us held out the hope that if we called next day it might be possible to get a sight of them, which however was not realised.<sup>1</sup>

Having no introductions to Jews in Damascus, I had not an opportunity of seeing the interior of any of the houses of the more wealthy

<sup>1</sup> A full description of this house is given by Mr Porter, vol. i. pp. 35, 36.

members of their community, some of which are said to be well worthy of a visit. We were taken to the house of a Jew who dealt in Damascus blades and turquoises, which was handsomely furnished with Turkey carpets and furniture made after the European model, though it had no pretensions to architectural ornament either within or without. I never saw in the largest jewellery establishment in London such an assortment of turquoises as were there exhibited to us; but the prices asked were very little below those taken at home. As Mrs Tobin and Miss Chesney accompanied us on this visit, the ladies of the house made their appearance, and talked away fluently in Italian, turning out everything for inspection that they thought would interest us. Mr Ghebard became the purchaser of a dagger of curious shape and of proved metal; but cold steel was not at all to my fancy,—albeit for self-defence I had been obliged for some time to carry pistols. These Jewish ladies wore on their heads little Greek skull-caps embroidered with gold, round which their long black tresses were gracefully wound in the form of a turban. When they entered, they were walking on pattens some six inches above the ground; these were laid aside when they got to the divan, but were resumed again when they began to move about. Sweetmeats and coffee, with the never-failing chibouk, were handed round, after which we took our leave. The Jewish population of Damascus is estimated at between 12,000 and 13,000; the Christian at rather more; while the general population is reckoned at 125,000.

We took a hurried glance at the old castle and the seraiyah, which contains the Seraskier's palace, and a barrack for soldiers. Near the latter, Mr Porter afterwards pointed out to me the remains of one of the ancient gates called Bab el Jábyah which stood at the western extremity of 'the straight street,' as the Bab Shurky still does at its eastern extremity. Under his guidance I paid a visit to the Great Mosque. In the bazaar to the left of it I had previously noticed four ancient columns, and these he informed me belonged to a triumphal arch, a portion of the top of which still stood entire, above the roof of the bazaar. This formed the approach to a heathen temple which once occupied the site where the mosque now stands, possibly that of the god Rimmon.—2 Kings v. 18. The mosque itself was once a Christian church, dedicated to St John the Baptist;<sup>1</sup> and as I saw it

<sup>1</sup> In a cave underneath, the head of the Baptist is said to be deposited. The reader may remember that a portion of his skull, in a golden casket, was exhibited to us in the Greek Church of St John at Jerusalem. How many heads had he?—or how much yet remains of the head in the Mosque at Damascus?

afterwards from Mr Consul Wood's house, it was easy to perceive that the style of architecture belongs to the west, though minarets and other Saracenic additions have been made to it. I saw nothing in Damascus to indicate the fanatical hatred which its inhabitants exhibited to all who did not profess the Moslem faith up to the time of Ibrahim Pasha's occupation, except the jealousy with which they guard the entrance to the mosque. We were, however, able to get a slight glimpse of the interior through the massive iron gates which close in the court at the end of the book bazaar; but the only thing that has left an impression on my mind regarding it is the innumerable rows of pillars which it seemed to contain. In passing through the book bazaar Mr Porter pointed out a shop, from whence he sometimes procured valuable works in Arabic. 'Then by all means let us enter,' I said, 'and see what he has got for sale.' Mr Porter replied, laughing, 'If we were to go into his shop he would at once deny having the books we asked for, or probably deign no reply; for he would get into trouble immediately, if it were known he sold good Moslem books to the *Giouws*. When he has a curious book for sale, he brings it by night to my house; but he would not recognise me in the bazaar on any account.' This, at least, was convincing proof, that although Christians may now ride through the town without fear of being stoned or torn to pieces, much of the old fanatical spirit remains still untamed in the breasts of the people.

The Greek Church, which we visited, presented nothing attractive. Our cicerone then insisted on our visiting the house of Ananias, which is a vault below ground of ancient construction. The house of Judas (Acts ix.), I was informed, was the counterpart of this; so we did not think it worth a visit. Poor people, if they burrowed underground, as the monks would have us believe, must have been as miserable in outward estate as the outcast population of our own overcrowded cities. The eastern gate of the city, Bab Shurky, is extremely interesting, as it consists of three arches of Roman architecture. The small one to the north forms the modern gateway, the other two having been long walled up. Outside this gate to the north there are large mounds, which probably cover a portion of the ancient city. Following the course of the old walls towards the south, we came at the distance of a few hundred yards from Bab Shurky upon another gate now walled up, which tradition points out as the spot where St Paul was let down in a basket from the wall, and made his escape, though the Governor kept the gates to apprehend him.—2 Cor. xi. 32. A single glance at the architecture of the gate shows that it had no

existence in St Paul's day; besides which, common sense might have taught those who were looking out for a suitable place with which to associate that episode in the apostle's life, that the gates being closely guarded for fear of his escape, he would scarcely have been so foolhardy as to dangle down before the very noses of those who were on the watch for him. A short way farther to the east, our guide told us was the spot where Paul was converted; but our curiosity did not prompt us to visit it, as that event must have taken place somewhere to the west of the city on the road from Jerusalem. It appears that, as in the case of the locality of St Stephen's martyrdom at Jerusalem, the monks have, since the time of the Crusades, altered the place of Paul's conversion to suit their own convenience. 'In the days of the Crusaders, as we learn from de Vitry,' says Mr Porter, 'the spot where the miracle was enacted was believed to be near the village of Kaukâba, between two hills about six miles west of the city on the great Jerusalem road, and the tradition remained undisturbed for more than five centuries; for this is the place that was shown to D'Arvieux. This spot being too far distant for pilgrims to walk or holy fathers to conduct them, and besides the whole western part of the city being inhabited by bigoted Muslems, it has been deemed advisable of late to transfer the scene to the eastward.'<sup>1</sup> We terminated our hurried inspection of the sights of Damascus by a visit to the coffee-houses on the banks of the Barada, which are said to present a very picturesque appearance when fully illuminated at night. I paid two visits to Mr Wood, H. B. M. Consul, during my short stay, and was received both by him and his beautiful lady with the greatest kindness. The house he occupied is one of the celebrities of Damascus for its courts, gardens, halls, and internal decorations. In courtesy of demeanour, there is a notable contrast between him and his colleague at Beyrout. He is a man of high character and intellectual calibre, combining much energy and prudence with frank and most attractive manners; and no man within the Pashalik possessed such influence over the native population, Moslem and Druse, or did more to uphold British influence. It seems, therefore, to the uninitiated an act of suicidal folly on the part of our Government, instead of appointing such a man Consul-General for Syria, to have removed him from a post for which he was so well qualified, in order to consign him to oblivion at Tunis, or some other insignificant regency on the African coast. To be sure, it was before the cry arose for 'the right man in the right place.'

<sup>1</sup> Porter, *Five Years in Damascus*, vol. i. p. 43.

*April 8.*—At nine o'clock we left Damascus by the Bab es Salahíyeh for Baalbek. We had been led to hope before arriving, that we should have the good fortune to witness the entrance into the city of the great caravan from Bagdad, and were even prepared to wait another day on purpose had it been known to be approaching, but as rumours had reached the city that the caravan had been attacked by the Bedouins on its way across the Desert, and had returned to Bagdad, it was unnecessary to make longer delay. The Consul's dragoman rode to the gate to get us permission to pass without being examined by the custom-house officers, a trouble they were very willing to forego on payment of a backshish. The road from the gate to the village of Salahíyeh is very pretty, being shaded with trees, and hemmed in on both sides with gardens watered from the Barada. After passing the village, we got out on waste uncultivated ground at the foot of the hills to the north, which only rendered the scene we were leaving more lovely. Ascending a pass in the hills near the weli we had seen to the north as we approached Damascus, we came to another custom-house station, where fresh backshish was exacted; and on getting to the summit we lost sight of Damascus and its plain, and began to descend by a breakneck path to the village of Dummar. A belt of trees on either side of the Barada enlivens the otherwise barren and uninteresting aspect of the valley in which the village is situated. Instead of crossing the river by the Jisr el Dummar, and pursuing the path usually taken along its right bank, I had resolved to visit the fountain of Fijeh, which many suppose to be the Abana. Mr Porter had advised our getting a guide at Dummar, and after the display of some reluctance, we at last got one of the villagers to accompany us, on the condition that the backshish should be paid him before setting out. This we had no objections to do; only bearing in mind how the guide at Mukéibleh had deserted the Messrs Smith and myself after being paid beforehand, I suggested the propriety of our having 'a material guarantee,' and accordingly insisted on his handing over his gun to the safe keeping of Shaheen. We rode in a north-westerly direction through a succession of bare and poorly cultivated glens for an hour, or rather more, diminishing gradually our distance from the range of Anti-Lebanon, when my trusty dragoman having his suspicions of treachery on the part of the guide lulled, or more probably having got weary of carrying the gun, handed it back to its owner, while we were in advance; when the fellow silyly pretending to espy some game a little to the left of the road, and announcing his intention to shoot it, bolted off beyond reach of our pistols, fired his gun into the air in

triumph, and with a wild hurrah set off at a gallop over the hills to his village again! Our annoyance at this trick was to a certain extent modified by the rascal's adroitness, but Shaheen had to bear the brunt of our ill-humour; for we were now in a very uncomfortable predicament with the rain coming down in torrents, and neither of the dragomen acquainted with the route which we had taken. Another half hour brought us to a stand still on the top of an eminence covered with vineyards, from which two paths led down valleys in opposite directions to the north and south. Which were we to choose? Neither house nor human being was in sight, and our men strongly counselled the path to the north. I almost wish now we had allowed them their way, for it would have brought us through some magnificent scenery to a place called Hebbón, which Mr Porter has successfully identified with HELBON, whose wine is mentioned in Ezekiel as one of the commodities that Damascus supplied to the market of Tyre (Ezekiel xxvii. 18), and in which there is a local tradition, that Abraham offered up a sacrifice as he returned from the defeat of Chedorlao-mer and his confederates.—Gen. xiv. Mr Porter had mentioned it as being a few hours to the north of Damascus, but at the time I did not know it lay so near our path; and as he had told me our way to Fijeh lay down a valley shut in by precipitous crags, full of ancient sepulchres, we chose the vine-clad valley leading south, which appeared to be flanked with the ramparts described, and in an hour we found to our great satisfaction that we had chosen rightly, for we came upon the Barada at one of the most romantic spots in its course, where the village of Bessíma stands in a nook at the junction of two precipitous mountains, through which we could perceive no opening for the river to pursue its eastward course. As it was already four o'clock, and a long journey still lay before us, we had no time to dismount and examine the outgate of the river. Mr Porter has since described it thus:—'After sweeping through the narrow strip of gardens above the village, the river enters a gorge, so narrow, that no space is left except a goat path along the bank. Here, tunnelled through the side of the perpendicular cliff, is an ancient aqueduct, which once brought water from the great fountain at Fijeh, and its dry bed now forms the only path of communication between this village and that of Ashrafiyeh, twenty minutes farther down.'<sup>1</sup> Traces of this aqueduct we met with frequently as we rode along the rich romantic glen through which the river runs, among groves of walnut and poplar

<sup>1</sup> Porter's *Five Years in Damascus*, vol. i. p. 257.

trees, shut in by precipitous barriers of rock from two to three thousand feet high. We reached the village of Fijeh at five o'clock, and five minutes beyond it halted for a little at Ain Fijeh. The fountain rushes out from beneath a hill of limestone rock, with immense impetuosity, through an ancient archway under the modern path. It is impossible to determine how far inward the arch extends, or whether there is a passage beyond it, natural or artificial, into the heart of the hill. The water issues from the arch in such volume, that after tumbling over some projecting ledges of rock or fallen ruins, it expands at once into a stream ten yards in width; which after a short but rapid course of one hundred yards, falls into the Barada. At the right side of the arch are the remains of a temple of massive construction, apparently of Roman times, which no doubt was dedicated to the nymphs of the fountain. Many besides Dr Wilson have sought for one of the rivers of Damascus in this short but impetuous stream. In the Desert, or the south of Judea, there would be some excuse for calling it a river, but while we have the Awaj, a river little inferior in length to the Barada itself, and irrigating like it the plain of Es Shem, it seems rather making a fool of the rivers of Damascus to dub Fijeh one of them, especially considering how many hours distant it is from the city. Mr Porter was the first who called attention both in England and America to the Nahr el Awaj;<sup>1</sup> and there can be little doubt from his arguments, that while the Barada is the ancient Abana, the Awaj, and not the Fijeh, is the Pharphar of Naaman. After leaving the fountain, the road retires somewhat farther from the banks of the Barada, and passes through the villages of Deir Mukúrrin and of Kefr es Zeit. We reached the first at 5.35, and the other a quarter of an hour later. Beyond Kefr es Zeit the wadi makes a turn to the north-north-west, in which direction high precipitous walls of rock like those we had passed in Wadi Bessíma, rose before us on the right bank of the river, and beyond them we were told lay Súk Wadi Barada, where we were to find shelter for the night. Just as it was getting dark, we rode up to a village called Kefr el Awamed, supposing that to be the place we were in search of; but the Sheikh of the village undeceived us, and put us on the road we were to follow. We crossed the river on a bridge, and left our horses to pick their steps as best they could in the dark, and at last by the barking of dogs we ascertained the vicinity of a village, and dismounted in what

<sup>1</sup> Kitto's Journal of Sacred Literature, and the Bibliotheca Sacra. For a short *resumé* of the argument, see 'Five Years in Damascus,' vol. i. p. 276.

once was the capital of Abilène. *Quantum mutatus ab illo!* Súk is an insignificant little village, with tortuous muddy streets, which can boast of no edifice of higher pretensions than a flour-mill driven by the waters of the Barada. We had not the same difficulty in procuring accommodation here as at Demás, for the family at whose door we first knocked at once cleared out their rugs and other chattels, and made over to us the use of their own fireside. It would have been a comfort if, while flitting the rest of their worldly goods, they had also removed the mat spread on the clay floor of the divan, for the legions of fleas which issued out of it during the night it is impossible to calculate. Till then I had thought them harmless creatures, but their united attacks produced fever, and rendered sleep impossible.

*April 9.*—With the earliest dawn I left the haunted house, and began to explore the village in hope of finding some remains of the ancient city of Abila; but with the exception of two or three broken shafts of columns, there were none around the village. On the other side of the river, however, there were ruins which I had not time to visit. About half a mile down the stream, on the left bank, lies the village of Berheléyah, which we had not observed as we passed it in the dark the night before. The high precipitous mountain to the left of Súk is called Ghebel Nebi Habil, from a tradition that Abel was buried on its summit. Whether this be true or not, the inhabitants of Abila had cut tombs for their dead in its bare rocky sides, which still remain to testify their handiwork though their city has long ceased to exist. It was here that Lysanias as tetrarch of Abilène had his abode, at the time when John the Baptist began his public ministry (Luke iii. 1), and frequent mention is made of it by Josephus; but its history is so fully given by Mr Porter that it would be waste of time to enlarge on it here.<sup>1</sup> We left Súk at 6.45, and in a few minutes got into a narrow gorge with rock walls apparently reaching the clouds, by which the Barada has burst a way for itself through the eastern range of Anti-Lebanon. The path through this gorge is very tortuous, and in the middle of it we crossed the river by a bridge, and came upon an ancient aqueduct cut out of the rock, and upon a piece of workmanship of still more gigantic proportions, viz., a road some hundred yards above the level of the present path, hewn through the solid rock, which ends in an abrupt precipice, with the river rolling and chafing below. This seems to indicate that in the course of years it has undermined and swept away a considerable portion of the

<sup>1</sup> Five Years in Damascus, vol. i., pp. 262-273.



handiwork of the ancient Romans. On ascending to this roadway, I found two Latin inscriptions cut on the northern wall of rock, both of which were perfectly legible, and with the exception of a word or two in one of them, still entire. These I carefully copied, but afterwards found they had been printed both by Dr Wilson and M. De Sauley, to whose books the reader curious in such matters is referred.<sup>1</sup> They contain the names of the Emperors M. Aurelius Antoninus and L. Aurelius Verus, and are chiefly interesting as fixing with certainty the position of Abila, by these words with which one of them concludes: IMPENDIIS ABILENORUM.

My companion having no taste for such investigations was far ahead before I got into my saddle again, and I had to ride hard to make up to him: passing on the way a fine waterfall, the remains of an old Roman bridge over the river, and another herd of sheep led by the wild men of Khurdistan. Just as we entered Wadi Zebedani at 8.20, we caught sight of the village of Batroun in the hills beyond the river to the south-west, by which there is a road into the Sahleh Jedeideh, which we had crossed on our way to Damascus before entering Wadi el Kurn. Here also the mountain stream which we had crossed so often in the latter wadi falls into the Barada. Our course was nearly due north along the eastern side of Wadi Zebedani, a plain from two miles and a half to three miles in width, and eight miles long, in the middle of which there is a small reedy lake whence the Barada takes its rise. Like Sahleh Jedeideh farther south, this plain lies between the eastern and western chains of the Anti-Libanus, the former of which is much the loftier of the two, rising, according to Mr Porter, to an average elevation of 6000 feet. At 9.15 we passed on the hillside to the right the village of Modiayah, and shortly afterwards the Khan Fundúk, where there is a group of five springs, sending a rivulet down to the lake. Our ride had been an unpleasant one, in consequence of the whole plain having become a bog from the melting of the snow; and from Khan Fundúk to the village of Zebedani, situated at the north-west extremity of the plain, the narrow lane through which we passed was one continuous pool of liquid mud. Zebedani, which we reached at 9.45, is prettily situated among orchards, gardens, and walnut groves, and is larger than Súk; but quite as muddy and filthy in its interior economy as any of the villages we had seen in the Lebanon district, though the worst of these is better than those of Palestine.

<sup>1</sup> Wilson's *Lands of Bible*, vol. ii., p. 374. De Sauley's *Journey*, vol. ii., p. 590.

We passed through the village without halting, and ascended a glen by the side of Nahr Zebedani, a brawling torrent, which takes its rise at the fountain of Ain Hauwar, three quarters of an hour higher up, and runs into the Wadi Zebedani below. At eleven o'clock we entered another plain called Wadi Surgheiyah, the lower part of which was bleak and uncultivated, and nearly unpassable from the porridgy state of the soil to the depth of a foot below the surface. It likewise runs north and south, separating the ridges of Anti-Libanus. We halted for three quarters of an hour in the neighbourhood of a Mussulman village at its northern extremity bearing the same name. Notwithstanding the screen formed by the villagers who crowded round to watch us eating, the sharp wind which swept down the valley was intolerably cold. A powerful spring in the neighbourhood is the source of a rivulet which we followed in its northward course down a pretty glen, until it turned into Wadi Yahfúfeh, a wild narrow pass leading through the western ridge of Anti-Libanus to the great plain of Cœle-Syria. Another plain, similar in appearance to the two we had already traversed, now opened up before us to the north; but instead of following it, after crossing an old Roman bridge, we began to ascend the steep side of the western mountains from the point of junction of the three valleys. We passed one or two stunted cedars by the side of the path, but except wild crags above and below, there was no very interesting scenery in our immediate vicinity; the distant view, however, of the eastern range of Anti-Libanus and of the plain of Surgheiyah, which we had left behind, and of the great Buká'a and Lebanon, with its highest peaks enveloped in snow, which opened up as we advanced, was truly magnificent. The mountain path led first due west and then turned to north-west by north, and after passing the crest of the mountain, a scramble through a deep belt of snow, which reminded us of our adventure on the opposite mountain, brought us at 3.20 to the village of Khureibeh; a pleasant and healthy situation enough during the heat of a Syrian summer, if only it contained a decent house, but bleak and desolate in the extreme at the season when we passed it. A long steep descent brought us into Wadi Masnáh, which we crossed only to commence another ascent; and thus alternately ascending and descending the spurs of Anti-Libanus, we reached at last the village of Bereitán at 5.15, and learned from some of the inhabitants that Baalbek was still upwards of two hours distant. During the ride from Khureibeh, the highest peak of Lebanon, called Sunnín, had been constantly in view, and the changes of colour on its snowy sum-

mit, as the sun declined and finally disappeared, were very gorgeous, and would have formed a noble study for a painter. At 5.50 we reached the village of Teiyibeh, beyond which, on the side of a deep narrow gorge, we came upon traces of a Roman road, which continued with greater or less regularity for about a quarter of an hour. On getting to the top of the northern bank of this gorge we caught sight of the ruins of Baalbek, presenting in the fading twilight a confused mass of pillars standing out on the plain, at the base of a projecting spur of the eastern mountains. Before we reached it, however, the full moon shed a flood of light upon its long and graceful pillars, tracing gigantic shadows on the dark plain behind them; and we reckoned ourselves most fortunate in witnessing a sight which far eclipses in solemnity and grandeur the far-famed moonlight view of the Colosseum at Rome. We dismounted at 7.30 at the door of a cottage, where our enemies of the previous night, though numerous enough, were not in such legions as to prevent sleep.

*April 10.*—By half-past seven we were already abroad; and leaving the temples till the last, began with a survey of the modern village, which consists in groups of mean huts scattered irregularly within a quadrangular wall of great extent, in its present form of Saracenic structure; though it probably follows the same course as the wall of the Greek city of Heliopolis, or at least of the Roman Colonia Julia Augusta. About half-way between the house in which we had lodged and the northern wall, we looked into a mosque fast falling to ruins, where some fragments of capitals, inscriptions, etc., are stowed away. The wall runs a considerable way up the side of the hill towards the south-east, in which direction we were told the necropolis lay; but as we had to be at Beyrout by the following evening, our time was too limited to admit of our visiting it. Passing out by one of the northern gates now in ruins, we walked along the outside of the wall towards the west; observing by the way that the lower portions were ancient while the upper parts were of more modern workmanship, though the old materials had been chiefly used. At one place we observed four stones in a line in the wall, five courses above the ground, which contained part of an inscription in letters about six inches long. One of the stones was built in upside down. It was as follows:—

**LUCIL** **×** **SEVERI** **CELNAE**

At another gate of the town, still farther to the west, a considerable portion of the ancient gateway still remains entire. After making a hasty circuit of a portion of the walls, we left to the right the long

straggling cavalry barrack erected by Ibrahim Pasha, now in an advanced state of decay; and proceeded to visit carefully the vast pile of building on which the temples stand, as the chief interest of Baalbek centres in them. It has been too often described to require more than a passing notice. At the north-west corner we saw two Latin inscriptions let into the face of the wall, but at such a height, and so much damaged by age, that we could only make out a word or two with the naked eye. They have been frequently copied, and simply intimate that some unknown courtier had caused the bronze pillars in the walls to be gilt in honour of the young Caracalla. It is probable from the bare unfinished look of the northern front, as well as from some broken shafts of pillars, that a handsome portico originally formed the approach to the platform, constructed on arches of great height, on which all the edifices stood. From this portico two side staircases gave access to a porch which now forms the most northerly part of the pile. A door in the middle of this porch leads into an hexagonal hall behind it, now in a very ruinous state. From it entrance is obtained into a large quadrangular court still farther to the south, the sides of which are adorned with niches, in which probably statues of the gods or of the emperors were placed; while in the middle the foundations of a smaller quadrangular edifice are easily discernible. Whether this was a third temple, or, as De Sauley supposes, a Christian church which Theodosius built upon the ruins of the Temple of Balanios, it is impossible to decide. The following passage from the 'Paschal Chronicle,' quoted by him, certainly gives ground for the belief that a Christian church formed an integral part of this polluted fane in the latter days of the Roman empire. 'Theodosius likewise overthrew the Temple of Heliopolis, that is to say, of Balanios; the great and famous temple, the trilithon temple, and converted it into a Christian church.'<sup>1</sup> Dr Wilson, not attending to this overthrow, erroneously supposes that the smaller temple still standing was converted into a Christian church. Still passing south from this quadrangular court, the magnificent temples stand out to view in a large open space; the smaller and more perfect one on the left hand, and a fragment of the other, consisting of six pillars, with their entablature, on a higher platform to the right. The smaller temple has lost its roof, and several of the pillars on the eastern side have fallen

<sup>1</sup> Ο Θεωδοσιος και καταλυσεν το ιερον Ἡλιουπολειως, το του Βαλανιου, το μεγα και περιεβοητον, και το τριλιθου, και εποισεν αυτο Εκκλησιαν Χριστιανων. — *Chron. Paschale*, quoted by De Sauley, vol. ii. p. 630.

or recline against the main body of the edifice; but it is on the whole in a wonderful state of preservation. On the western side the peristyle is nearly complete, and its roof is divided into compartments which exhibit the heads of gods and goddesses in *alto relievo*, executed in a style of most exquisite workmanship. The white indurated limestone of the neighbourhood is the material employed in their construction. The pillars, which are about seventy feet in height, are of the Corinthian order. The most remarkable object in the smaller temple is the great doorway, on the lintel of which an eagle of gigantic proportions, with a wreath of flowers in his beak and a thunderbolt in his talons, is sculptured in high relief, and remains in a state of perfect preservation. Unfortunately the wedge or middle block has sunk down several inches; and as there is no one to administer 'the stitch in time,' the bird of Jove will be found some fine morning biting the dust. It is supposed that the other temple, the tall graceful pillars of which form a prominent object in every drawing of Baalbek, had never been completed, and that we now see but a fragment of what was itself originally only a fragment of an unexecuted design. This vast pile of building was in after times converted into a Turkish fortress, and many buildings were added to it, whilst the outer walls were heightened and loopholed; so that it is often impossible to determine with accuracy where the ancient workmanship ends and the modern, constructed with ancient materials, begins. A few hundred yards to the north-east of the great pile of building a pretty little circular temple of Corinthian architecture stands surrounded by mean hovels, through some of which we were obliged to pass to get at it. Dr Wilson's conjecture that this was the porter's lodge occupied by the beadle-deity, seems a very probable one; and possibly another circular temple of similar dimensions, which on leaving we passed about a mile to the south-west of the town, may have lodged a similar functionary.

By far the most interesting portions of the ruins of Baalbek, however, are the substructions on the western, and partially on the southern side of the vast edifice. No one can look at them, without being convinced that they are of much more ancient date than the purely Roman portions of the fabric. On the western side there are but three tiers of stone, one of which is composed of three blocks, measuring in length respectively 62, 64, and 68 feet. It is from these that it derives the name of the trilithon temple in the Paschal Chronicle. Their height is fifteen feet, and breadth thirteen feet. There is another of fabulous size in the south-west corner of the building; and in the quarry whence they were taken, about half a mile distant, there is a

similar block hewn out, and ready for removal, which measures 68 feet in length, 14 in height, and 16 in breadth. It is a subject of wonder by what mechanical appliances such ponderous masses could have been transported, and raised to the places they now occupy; but whatever they were, the perfect nicety with which the blocks are joined together, shows that they were handled and managed with complete control. This wall reduces to most pigmy proportions what we are wont in Europe to call the *cyclopean* walls of the ancient Etrurians. Popular tradition assigns the construction of Baalbek to King Solomon, the builder of Tadmor in the Desert; and the fact mentioned in Scripture that he built cities in Lebanon (1 Kings ix. 19, 2 Chron. viii. 4, 6) as far north as Hamath, renders that tradition not improbable, though the ancient fragment just described ought probably to be assigned to a much earlier period. It has been conjectured by some to be either the Baal-gad mentioned by Joshua (Joshua xi. 17, xiii. 5), or the Baalhermon of 1 Chron. v. 23; but these towns are expressly indicated as lying in the immediate vicinity of Mount Hermon, while Baalbek is at least two days journey from it, which renders such an identification out of the question. By others it has been supposed to be Baalath, mentioned among the cities which Solomon built in the passages already referred to; but I can find no evidence to prove that such a city existed in the Valley of Lebanon; while Josephus, on the contrary, expressly states that the Baalath built by Solomon was near Gezer, in the country of the Philistines.<sup>1</sup> In the Book of Canticles, however, Solomon makes mention of a Baal-hamon (Song of Solomon viii. 11), in the neighbourhood of which he had a vineyard; and this, as uniting the Syrian and Egyptian names of Jupiter, may probably have been the most ancient appellation of Heliopolis or Baalbek, where that deity was worshipped by the Phœnicians long before Solomon's day. Though treasures of fabulous amount have been expended by successive generations to uphold and perpetuate in that region the worship of idols, these ruins testify how vain the attempt. 'Bel is confounded!' and no Christian can look on them, without the prayer rising to his lips, So perish all those systems of false worship, which still delude the nations, and withhold earth's universal homage from King Messiah, whose right it is! Viewed simply in an artistic light, the following quotation, accidentally met with in a magazine from a work I have never seen,<sup>2</sup> conveys better than I could do in language of my own, the impression these ruins left on me. 'The

<sup>1</sup> Josep. Antiq. lib. viii., cap. 6.

<sup>2</sup> Notices of Holy Land.

moss and the ivy of the ruins in England give them an inexpressible charm; the massiveness of the Egyptian structures strikes the mind with awe. But in looking at these immense stones and columns, the feeling was one of melancholy alone, that time should have been so merciless in his devastations, without adding any of those telling touches that in other places make us almost forgive him for his deed.'

The path which leads to the Cedars crosses the broad plain nearly due west from Baalbek; but as we were informed it would still be a month ere the snow was sufficiently melted to make them accessible, it would have been vain for us to make the attempt. The river Orontes takes its rise only a few miles to the north of Baalbek, while the waters of the Ras el Ain, to the south of the ruined temples, and of other streams in the neighbourhood, are the sources of the Litani, which, under the name of Khasmiyeh, we had seen falling into the sea in the neighbourhood of Tyre. We left the village of Baalbek at 10.30; and after visiting the quarry where the monster block still waits removal to join its companions in the old Phœnician wall, and the little octagonal temple composed of polished granite pillars, called Kubbet Douris, which stands by the roadside about three quarters of an hour south-west from the main pile, set out on a long and, owing to the wetness of the soil, weary ride down the plain of Cœle-Syria. Our course was south-west towards the little village of Mekseh at the foot of the mountain on the Beyrout road; and to reach it, we gradually traversed the plain from the foot of Anti-Libanus to the base of Lebanon. Hermon and Sunnín the highest peak of Lebanon were in sight all day long, and added a scriptural interest to a scene in itself very lovely and striking. These mountains are apparently of nearly equal height, being somewhere between 9000 to 10,000 feet above the level of the sea. Sunnín is said to rise 4000 feet above the level of the Buká'a, which must consequently be 6000 feet above the level of the sea. The plain, though far from being under complete cultivation, is on the whole well cropped; and, under a careful system of agriculture, would, from the abundance of water which it contains, be capable of producing probably a hundred-fold what it at present yields.

The inhabitants of the country stoutly maintain that it was the cradle of the human race, and the centre of the world's second population from the family of Noah, in opposition to all rival claims, Armenia and Ararat not excepted. On the eastern slopes of Lebanon, considerably to the north of Sunnín, they point to the village of Edhen as the paradise in which our first parents were placed. On the hill above Abila, as we have seen, tradition points out the tomb of the

protomartyr Abel; the village of Nebi Schit, at the foot of Anti-Libanus, a few miles below Bereitán, boasts the keeping of the tomb of Seth; and later in the day, at the base of Lebanon, we passed a weli raised over the pretended tomb of Noah. Judging from the length of the tombs assigned to these patriarchs, the Mohammedans entertain no doubt that 'there were giants in those days!' That of Noah is twenty feet in length; while I was told the tomb of Nebi Schit, though curtailed of its fair proportions from some accident which befel the Patriarch, is of still greater length.

At 12.40 we passed the village of Tallín, and shortly afterwards descried two horsemen approaching, one of whom, from his scarlet costume, we soon recognised as Mr Fletcher's dragoman; the other was Mr Fletcher himself, who, finding he had still time to visit Damascus owing to a change in the arrangement of the steamers, had set out from Beyrout after the weather cleared in as light marching order as ourselves. To our great mortification, after having 'done' Damascus and Baalbek in true tourist style to get back in time for the steamer, we were informed by him that the day of sailing had been postponed for a whole week. It was then too late to turn back; but if we had met him as near Damascus as he then was to Baalbek, we should have hailed the respite as a piece of great good luck. Wishing our friend a safe passage through the slough of Surgheiyah, and recommending him to go by Fijeh, we bade him *au revoir*, and again proceeded on our way. We passed the Litani about two o'clock, and found the road for some distance on either side a quagmire, owing to the recent overflow of its waters. The Metuwalih village of Timnéen was reached at 4.30, and half an hour afterwards that of Ablah, inhabited by Christians of the Latin Church. We had on the right hand, about the same time, the Christian village of Ferzoul, beautifully situated on the wooded slopes of Lebanon, along the base of which we now rode, fording in rapid succession its icy streams. At 4.50 we passed through the village of Kerak, and at five through that of Malakah, the former inhabited by Metuwalih, the latter by Catholics. Just before entering the former village we passed to the right the tomb of Nebi Nouah, already referred to; and on emerging from the latter, we turned westward into a narrow valley running far into the mountains, and watered by a broad rapid river, on the banks of which the town of Zahleh is most picturesquely situated. Our dragomen wished us to remain there all night, but we had resolved to 'rough it' once more in Khan Mouraijat, the first of the notable hostelrys on the mountain side, and therefore resumed our course



without visiting Zahleh. Its inhabitants belong to the Latin Church, and it rejoices in a convent, the vesper bell of which, echoing among the hills, sounded like sweet music in my ears, so long strangers to the sound. In addition to the monks, the town of Zahleh is the headquarters of a Jesuit Mission, planted there by the ever active Propaganda at Rome. As we rode along, the setting sun lighted up in brilliant colours the *tells* near which moulder the ruins of ancient Chalcis, the villages of Mejdal and Merj, and above all the snowy Hermon. It was the last time we were to behold it chameleon-like changing its hues from brightest crimson to purple and then to leaden gray; and we were to look on it but once more from the mountain-pass on the morrow ere we bid it farewell, possibly for ever. It was dark long before we began the ascent of the mountain; and when we reached the khan at 7:30, we found it filled in every corner with travellers who had arrived before us. With difficulty we found room in the khanjee's small apartment to spread our *leháfs*, as there were already six persons billeted in it; but between the stifling fumes of wood-smoke, for which there was no escape but through the chinks in the door, and the ill-timed activity of hosts of 'industrious fleas,' sleep was out of the question. So ended our experience of life in khans; and my advice to every traveller would be to avoid them as he would the plague!

April 11.—About five in the morning another Postjee from Beyrout arrived, bringing the tidings that the mail had been robbed during the night at the wild pass above Khan Murád, where in our passage across the mountain horses and riders had rolled over and over in the snow. This was a pleasant prospect for those who, like us, were to pass the very spot within a couple of hours. Our dragomen became frightened, and wished to wait for further tidings; but as, beyond a few purchases made at Damascus, we had little of value about us, we contented ourselves with seeing that our pistols were in a serviceable state in case of need, and set out at 6.30 for Beyrout. I need not linger on our 'last look' at the fertile plain of Cœle-Syria, Anti-Libanus, and Hermon, for the regret at parting with friends whose society we have just begun to value is easily understood. At Khan Murád we could get no further information about the robbery than we started with in the morning; but our astonishment was great at finding in the middle of the pass, about a quarter of an hour after leaving it, the horse with the mail bags standing quietly where the robbery had been committed. A thick club lay on the ground beside him, and a rifled oil-skin package, which had contained *rouleaux* of dollars. A hole had been cut in the side of one of the bags to extract

it, out of which various copies of the Journal de Constantinople protruded, but nothing had been disturbed except the dollars aforesaid. As we were the first persons who passed the place, we examined it minutely, and arrived at the conclusion that there must have been an understanding between the Postjee and the robbers, as there was not the slightest evidence of a struggle having taken place. Our drago-men gave information to the Director of the Turkish Post on arriving at Beyrout, and the Postjee was brought back from Damascus and committed to prison before we left. The sun had done good service during our week's absence in melting the snow, and we got back to our old quarters at Khan Ruweisát without peril or adventure. During our forced residence there we had seen nothing of the scenery around, but now the pine-clad sides of the Metn, the wild valley of Hummána, the Maronite villages, with their churches, scattered in all directions over the mountain to the north, and glittering in the sun, the town and plain of Beyrout below, and the deep blue Mediterranean beyond as far as the eye could reach—formed a most enchanting *coup d'œil*. The district of Lebanon occupied by the Druses lies to the south of the Damascus road. Once more a backshish at the gate saved us all trouble with the custom-house officers, and at five o'clock we found ourselves domiciled in the only spare room in Demetri's hotel. A day or two later I shipped off Shaheen and the trusty Hanna by an English screw-steamer for Alexandria; not, however, before the former had squandered in gambling and drink almost the whole of the wages I had paid him.

Though a thriving entrepôt for commerce, Beyrout is a dull place to remain at in a state of forced inactivity. Mr Ghebard and I therefore proposed hiring fresh múkharis, and riding along the coast to Tripoli, visiting Jebel, and making acquaintance with the western side of Lebanon by the way, and embarking on board the steamer there. On inquiry, we found that the country through which we proposed to travel was in a very insecure state, and that we should need an escort of soldiers; so the plan was abandoned, and we contented ourselves with an excursion to the Nahr el Kelb or Dog river, the ancient Lycus, to visit the famed arrow-headed Assyrian inscriptions on the rocks in its vicinity. Passing the river of Beyrout, the ancient Magoras, by an old Roman bridge, and rounding the head of the Bay of St George, a beautiful ride of eight miles along the shore brought us to the high rocky promontory beyond which the Nahr el Kelb flows into the sea. The finest view of Beyrout is got from this point, as its houses and villas seem to rise in terraces from the water's edge

to the top of the hill which forms the Ras el Beyrout. Beyond the river we could trace the coast stretching north for many miles towards Jebeil, a town from which the Jebeleiyeh tobacco, grown in the surrounding districts of Lebanon, takes its name. This tobacco is dried by being hung up to the roofs of the mountain cottages, where it acquires a peculiar flavour from the wood-smoke which always hovers round their blackened rafters, which causes it to be preferred by many to the renowned tobacco of Latakia. Jebeil, however, possesses an interest arising from other causes than its tobacco. It is the ancient Byblus of the Romans, and the Gebal of Old Testament times. Joshua mentions 'the land of the Giblites and all Lebanon' as part of the land still to be conquered after his death.—Joshua xiii. 5. David mentions Gebal as confederate with the surrounding nations to cut off the Lord's people, 'that the name of Israel may be no more in remembrance.'—Ps. lxxxiii. 4. 7. In Solomon's reign the Giblites are mentioned as taking part in hewing the timber in Lebanon, and preparing the stones for building the House of the Lord in Jerusalem, along with the servants of Solomon and Hiram;<sup>1</sup> and at a still later period Ezekiel mentions them as the hired ship-builders of Tyre, in the prophecy which he uttered against the Queen of the Sea.—Ezek. xxvii. 9.

The present road over the Ras Nahr el Kelb has been cut in the rock like the Ladder of Tyre, and owes its origin to some Governor in the reign of Antoninus Pius, as a Latin inscription cut on a rock by the side of the river testifies; but there are traces of a still more ancient one higher up, along the quarried sides of which we found no less than seven Assyrian monuments, in more than one of which the monarch is represented exactly as in the drawings which Layard executed at Nineveh. They are all covered with the arrow-headed character, including the body of the king himself, but most of them are much injured by the sea-air and the atmosphere. Beside these, two of Egyptian workmanship have been set up in rivalry, some traces of the hieroglyphics of which may still be seen, though they have been more injured by time than the Assyrian inscriptions, if indeed they have not been purposely defaced by the kings of the East. De Sauley denies the existence of Egyptian monuments in these rocks, and calls them 'forgeries;' but I believe he will get no one who has carefully examined them to agree with him. I took sketches

<sup>1</sup> 1 Kings v. 18, rendered 'stone squarers' in our English version, but in the Hebrew text, עֲבָדֵי הַבֵּן.

of one of each of these sets of monuments, but I find them so correctly delineated in the 24th chapter of Dr Wilson's work, that it is unnecessary to reproduce them. I met my countrymen, whom I had chased through the Desert, again at Beyrout. They had just returned from an excursion to Nahr el Kelb as we arrived from Baalbek; and on asking for some information as to the number and position of these Assyrian monuments, they stared with astonishment, and vowed they had never heard of them.

The chief remains of ancient Berytus are to be found, like those of Tyre and Sidon, in the sea. The quay on one side of the ordinary landing-place, in the direction of the castle ruined by the English bombardment, is built almost entirely of ancient pillars laid horizontally upon one another. There are also a few ruins along the shore to the south of the modern town, the chief of which are the foundations of a quadrangular edifice, but whether heathen temple, Christian church, or bath establishment, it would be difficult to decide. M. De Saulcy goes for a Christian basilica; but from its situation at the water's edge, I am rather in favour of the hydropathic establishment. Among the many towns mentioned in Scripture this has no place; there is indeed mention made of a town called Berothah or Berothai, but it seems to have been far to the north-east of this seaport, in a line with Hamath.

I had looked forward with much interest to my arrival at Beyrout in order to make acquaintance with the American missionaries, and to obtain accurate information regarding their labours and success in the interesting mission field which the Great Head of the Church has opened up for them. Various causes hindered the realization of my hopes. I found the Rev. Dr Eli Smith, and his colleague Mr Whiting, keeping constant and anxious watch over the sick-beds of several members of their respective families who were dangerously ill, so that my intercourse with them was necessarily much more limited than I could have desired. In their emergency, I was glad to be able to preach for them on the Sabbath I spent at Beyrout, having been assured that beard and moustache formed no impediment, as many of the missionaries in Syria wear these appendages. Besides the British and American residents and travellers, several of the native converts attended, who were remarkably attentive. I had the opportunity of being present at a service in Arabic to a congregation of fifty persons, which was conducted by Mr Wortabed, a native minister, who had been lately ordained, and is now, I believe, the pastor of a flourishing Protestant Arab Church at Hasbeiyah. I also found the seminary so

successfully conducted by the American missionaries at one of the villages on Lebanon closed for the vacation, and was thus deprived of the opportunity of witnessing the manner in which it is carried on, and of comparing the progress made by the Arab pupils with that of the Armenian youths in Dr Wood's seminary at Bebek on the Bosphorus, which I had visited with the highest satisfaction many years before. I learned, however, that from Antioch and Aleppo, as far south as Hasbeyah and Sidon, nearly all the principal towns are occupied either by zealous and faithful missionaries from the other side of the Atlantic, or by native labourers whom they have trained for the ministry; and that, through their instrumentality, 'the Word of God grows mightily and prevails' once more in the land where our holy religion had its birth, and where men were first called Christians. Some of the churches and missionary societies of Britain, aware of the success which God has granted to the American missionaries, have become their fellow-labourers in the most effective manner, and in the spirit of true wisdom and brotherly love, not by intruding on their labours, and building on other men's foundations made ready to their hands, but by supplying them with the means for extending their operations. While the direction of these missions in the East remains in the hands of such men as Bishop Gobat in Palestine, and the Irish and American missionaries in Syria, I feel strongly impressed with the belief that, instead of multiplying missions to that country, we shall most effectively advance the Redeemer's kingdom by carrying out the plan of strengthening the missions already in the field, whose labours God has evidently owned. I refer, however, simply to the establishment of *new* missions, not by any means to sending out labourers from Scotland to act in concert with the brethren already there; for such an arrangement would not only be productive of present good by increasing the missionary staff in Syria, but would prove the most efficient means of preparing labourers to enter on other and still unoccupied mission fields, where the Arabic is the vernacular language.

Notwithstanding the distress in his own family, Dr Smith most kindly found time to conduct me over the mission premises connected with the American Church. In them he has his study, where he daily labours for a certain number of hours in the translation of the Scriptures into Arabic—a work for which his thorough and accurate acquaintance with that difficult language and his general scholarship peculiarly qualify him. The existing editions of the Arab Bible are found to be very imperfect; and if God spares him to complete his labour,<sup>1</sup> it will

<sup>1</sup> The above was written before Dr Smith's lamented death.—ED.

prove in the highest and holiest sense an imperishable monument for him. He had already completed the Pentateuch, and the New Testament as far as the end of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, at the time I saw him; and his edition is to be enriched with Scripture references. On tables ranged round his study, Bibles in various languages and of various editions lie open for consultation. Under the same roof there is a printing-press, a small steam-engine, and a type-foundry—all worked by native Arabs under the able direction of Mr Hurter, a missionary printer, so that all the appliances for diffusing knowledge are attached to the mission; and the tracts and religious works which have already issued from that press, have been sown broadcast by native hands over Syria.

I embarked on board the French steamer 'Mentor' on the evening of the 21st April, and bade adieu, with a heavy heart, to a land I had but half visited,—a land which must ever be dear to the Christian, as well from its past history as from the events of which it is still to be the theatre, when God brings back the captivity of His people. In the course of the voyage to Smyrna we touched at Tripoli, Latakía, Iskanderoun, Mersina, the port of Tarsus, and the island of Rhodes; and caught a passing glimpse of the island of Ruad opposite Tortosa, the ancient Arphad, of Mount Cassius, the mouth of the Orontes, the scene of Alexander's battle on the Issus, the snowy chain of Mount Taurus, and the isle of Patmos, where God's revelation to the sons of men was closed. There is a limit both to the reader and the publisher's patience, otherwise the voyage along the coast of Syria and Asia-Minor would afford materials for an interesting chapter. I saw Prince Napoleon in the streets of Smyrna, on his way to the scene of war; and would fain have accompanied my fellow-travellers to Constantinople, to renew acquaintance with old friends there, and to witness the disembarkation of the allied troops; but the time agreed on for my return to my congregation had already expired; and while they started by one steamer for Stamboul, another conveyed me to Malta and the shores of Italy.

## APPENDIX.

LETTER FROM THE REV. DR CLASON.—SEE PAGE 286.

EDINBURGH, 29th *January* 1857.

MY DEAR DR STEWART,—You are I hope by this time aware of the circumstances that have prevented me from answering till now your inquiries regarding the opening of the mosques at Jerusalem in April 1855, or from hastily attempting a description of what those who were admitted then saw. The truth is, that our visit was so hurried that it was impossible for any one to make a minute and accurate survey. If there was a willingness to let us in, there seemed a nervous anxiety to get us out. This must, in part, be ascribed to the irritation that was understood to prevail among the Mohammedans of Jerusalem at the proposal to admit Christians to a place which they deem so holy, and from which they had been excluded for so many ages; and to the fact that many more craved for admission than was ever expected, so that, instead of a small quiet party, there was a crowd. But I must begin at the beginning.

Our party reached Jerusalem on the Tuesday in Passion week; and shortly after our arrival, we learned that our countryman, Lord Napier, who had come from Constantinople on some important public business, was the bearer of a firman, authorising the admission of certain parties to the mosques of the Harám. I am unable to say in what terms the document was couched, but it was understood, in the first instance, that the number of the privileged was to be very limited, and so there was some whipping and spurring to get on the select list. The Duke and Duchess of Brabant were in Jerusalem, and I suppose the firman had some special reference to them; and of course Lord and Lady Napier and their party were included in it. The Pasha also and the British Consul, and I suppose the consuls of other European countries, had the power granted of admitting a limited number. Through the kindness of our mutual friend, Mr James Graham, I had the honour of being presented to the Pasha and from him had the warrant to enter.

But when there were so many Christian travellers in Jerusalem, and when there was something very interesting to be seen, it was not likely that there would be much regard to ceremony. Those that had no introduction, respectfully asked for tickets, and the officials flung aside all etiquette and good naturedly granted them. This was just as it should be. We were, in the first instance, ushered into a room in the Pasha's house, and it was there, I think, that I was informed fully of the admirable arrangement he had made for our quiet admission, so as not to occasion undue irritation. You are aware that the Harám is watched and protected by a strong guard under the command of a Sheikh, and that any one, not a Mohammedan, who encroaches on their territory, does so at the peril of his bodily safety, if not of his life, so strict are they in the discharge of their duty. These formidable officials were for the time removed, and their place was taken by bands of Turkish soldiers, who kept the various gates and patrolled over the ground. But there was another difficulty to be overcome, and how it was met I cannot well say, for no one seemed to understand the thing fully, except by conjecturing that the Pasha had made some wise arrangement on that head. The dervises are the legitimate possessors of the mosques, and a portion of them are constantly there. In our case they were not there as a body. If it had been otherwise there would assuredly have been a scene. It was reported that the Pasha had convened them in a room in some part of the city, on the pretence of his wishing to have a conference with them, and that they were locked up for the time. But, by some accident, one dervis had escaped his notice, and was alone in the Mosque of El Saharah when we entered; and when he saw such a multitude of those whom the Mohammedans call infidels, profaning the place which they deem so sacred, his shrieks of surprise, his vehement utterances of indignation, and howls of despair were truly appalling; but he was quickly and unceremoniously extruded, and quiet was restored. Before furnishing you with a description of the interior of the mosques, I must correct an error respecting their names that has hitherto been current among Europeans. There are three on the platform of the temple. The first, by much the largest and most magnificent, is called the Mosque of El Saharah—'the Rock,'—not the Mosque of Omar, as we have hitherto supposed. The second, El Aksa, which was in early times a Christian Church; and the third, which is the smallest of all, the Mosque of Omar.

And now, for the description of what we saw I most willingly give place to another. A talented and accomplished country-woman of our own, Miss Cooper of Ballindalloch, has most kindly granted me an extract from her journal, which contains a narrative far superior to anything I could have furnished, and I will venture to say equal, if not superior, to what could be given by any of the party who were there at that time. Miss Cooper, however, requests me to state, that her journal having been 'unavoidably very hurriedly written at the time, and for home perusal, she is quite aware there must be many omissions and even mistakes in it; but, such as it is, you are welcome to it.' The Harám is now of easy access to Europeans. Those who are admitted have an opportunity of visiting the mosques leisurely and with the aid of an interpreter and guide, and it is understood that accurate drawings and descriptions of these singular edifices will soon be given to the public; but it would be alike ungenerous and unjust, for those who have had such advantages, to treat otherwise than in the spirit of candour and kindness, what only claims to be a record of first impressions from a rapid survey. The following is Miss Cooper's narrative:—



‘JERUSALEM, 7th April 1855.

‘This afternoon we were surprised and delighted to find there was a prospect of our being admitted to see the Mosque of Omar, from which Christians hitherto have been most jealously excluded, and which, next to that at Mecca, is considered the holiest of all Mohammedan temples. It seemed that the Duke de Brabant had a firman from the Sultan to admit himself and suite, and the Pasha was liberal enough to extend the permission to the different consuls and other strangers; so we hurried off, and at the Governor’s house found a large assemblage among whom (besides the prince and his party) were Lord and Lady Napier, Lord Wharnccliffe and his family, the Bishop and his Lady, etc. In our haste, some mistake had been made about tickets for the ladies of our party, upon which the Pasha being applied to, desired to see us, and we then had the honour of being presented to his Highness, who was sitting on a low divan, in a small adjoining room, with a few of his officers about him. He very graciously gave his special permission for us to enter the mosque; and shortly after the whole assemblage were conducted down a dirty, dark, and partly vaulted passage, with a gate at the end by which we entered the large enclosure, in which stood formerly the Temple. Crossing this court we came to a broad flight of steps, before ascending which all had to put off their shoes. At the top are four marble arches, and this raised platform is also entirely paved with marble; at the corners and different places are small mosques or praying stations, one of which is pointed out as that of David; and in the middle stands the beautiful Mosque of Omar or Sakharah; it is a round building cased on the outside with encaustic tiles of the brightest colours, and the windows divided by marble columns all round. Under the base of the dome there is a broad border of Arabic inscriptions from the Koran; the dome is very large and was formerly gilded all over, but it is now dark and seems to be painted. Inside it is gorgeous with Arabesques, Mosaic of the brightest colours, and gilding, upon which the light falls through the rich stained-glass windows with an indescribable splendour. It is supported upon eight large square piers, and there is also a circle of beautiful large round pillars of different coloured marbles, of which also the floor is composed; but what I was most interested in seeing was the large mass of native limestone rock which occupies all the centre under the dome, and is surrounded by a screen of finely carved wood, with here and there small openings in it, through which the faithful may put their hands and touch the Holy Stone. I took leave to put in mine, and found the small part I could reach perfectly polished by the touch of pilgrims for ages past. What renders this rock so very interesting is, that it is believed to have supported the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple; it is the top of Mount Moriah, and has been left rugged and unhewn when this platform was raised on which the temple stood; its height seemed about eight or nine feet above the level of the floor. The Moslems hold it in great veneration, and say it hangs between heaven and earth like Mahomet’s Tomb. There is a grotto under it to which we descended by a good many steps; they show there an altar on which they say Isaac was offered, and a stone which cures diseases. We left the Sakharah by the opposite side; and crossing the platform, passed through a line of columns connected by open arches, and down another broad flight of steps, passing a large old fountain, around which parts of broken pillars were lying, and at the end

of the large enclosure entered the Mosque of El Aksa. It is in the form of a cross, and was a Christian Church, built it is said in the sixth century: but it has long been converted into a mosque; it is large and has handsome rows of pillars and richly-stained windows and arched aisles; there is also a beautifully carved pulpit or reading desk, and a small gallery; but compared with the Mosque of Omar, it is plain and bare within. Coming out of it we saw on one side the gate (now built up) which led, it is said, by a broad double-arched arcade down to the Golden Gate in the City Wall, which the Turks have also now built up, and on the other side, a long range of buildings used as a college by the Derwishes. The large court was green, and had a good many old trees scattered through it; but it was desolate looking, and made one sad to think of its former glory. But we were not allowed to linger much longer there; and, indeed, some were becoming rather anxious to be safe out of it, as we all knew our being there was not without danger from the Derwishes and black Fanatics, who are constantly about the mosque; and an incident which had occurred did not tend to re-assure us. A few minutes after we entered the Sakharah, at the first, we were startled by a piercing cry and prolonged howl, and some of the Turkish soldiers who escorted us, rushed round to where the noise proceeded from; there was then another howl and some scuffling, and some one was dragged out. We then heard that it was one of these Derwishes who unfortunately had not been secured along with his brethren (whom the Pasha had under lock and key at the time, though we were not aware of it). This man seeing the Christians enter their most sacred mosque, set up this cry of rage and horror, and, I daresay, many there as well as I, felt a thrill of terror, knowing that it is the firm belief of these people, that to kill a Giaour in such a case is a certain passport to paradise. We afterwards learned that the Pasha had been so well aware of the risk of some disturbance, that he had that morning sent for all the Derwishes, Santons, etc., under pretence of having some matters to discuss with them; and having assembled them all in a large hall they were locked up to await his leisure, and kept safe until we were all dispersed, and then dismissed, with some excuse that his Highness found that he would not require their counsel at present. Of course they were exceedingly enraged and furious when they found out what had taken place, and declared they would have stabbed any Christian dog they had found there, and even threatened the Pasha, with whom they are extremely disgusted; but he does not mind them, trusting to his soldiers (a strong guard of whom were about the mosque while we were there). I sincerely hope no evil may happen to him, for he has shewn much kindness and liberality in this matter. It is, indeed, a most remarkable innovation, and very unexpected; for centuries past no Jew or Christian had been permitted to enter there; and though one or two travellers in disguise, and passing for Moslems, have got in, it would have been certain death had they been discovered. The idea of all this rather frightened us at first, and several ladies would not go; but I cannot help rejoicing very greatly that I have seen a place so exceedingly interesting, and which has been so long inaccessible. As it is proverbially only '*le premier pas qui coute*,' and that being now happily got over in this matter, I think future travellers will have little difficulty in gaining access to the Mosque of Omar.

'P. S.—In speaking of the rock in the Sakharah, I see I have omitted to mention a kind of cutting or small open drain, which is at one end of it, and which

leads down into a deep well or shaft in the floor, but which is now quite covered up. Some think that this channel was for carrying off the blood of the sacrifices. The Mohammedans call it the Well of Souls, and say that people have sometimes had conversations with their departed friends here. I had heard, when on the Nile, from our Nubian dragoman Mahmoud, of such a place being at Jerusalem; but he believed the Well to be in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and told me a strange story of a man who had gone from Cairo to Jerusalem to converse with a deceased friend, and to get information from him about some money matters, and was quite successful! Poor Mahmoud! he at least was a true believer in it! I understood him to suppose it a kind of purgatory, where some not hopelessly condemned remained for a time, and others were reserved till the judgment of the great day.'

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I cannot venture to add a word to this satisfactory description unless it be to say that the whole company seemed to be pervaded with feelings of deep awe while they traversed those grounds which are associated in the minds of Christian believers with so much that is solemnising, and that they left them with regret that their visit was so short and hurried.

One thing I did not see, and that was the very thing that made me so anxious to visit the Harám. You must have observed that the platform on which the mosques are built, and which was undoubtedly the site of the ancient temple, is considerably elevated above the ground by which it is skirted. I forget how many steps we had to ascend after taking off our shoes, and putting on our slippers, according to the prescribed rule. This would lead one at once to infer that there must be a great deal of vaulting under the platform, and it is even so. Many years ago I met accidentally in Switzerland with Mr Brockedon, the historical painter, now no more. We were fellow-travellers for some days, and, though strangers to one another, were led into that kind of intercourse that one is wont to have with a well-informed countryman in a foreign land. He spoke much of Belzoni, and particularly of his visit to Jerusalem. Belzoni, when there, had a great desire to see the mosques, and he gained his object. He had presented some very valuable gift to the Pasha, and when he was asked what he would take in return, his answer was, that he wished for nothing but to enter the Harám and to survey the mosques thoroughly. After much hesitation his request was granted. He was admitted; and, once admitted, he had the opportunity of visiting the grounds frequently. But he was not satisfied with looking at the surface; he descended to the vaults, and by torch-light narrowly examined the under structure. The result was, his assuring Mr B., that, if he had been an infidel, which he declared he was not, what he saw in the buildings under the platform would have been enough to destroy his confidence in his own judgment, because the architecture belonged to a very ancient era. I mention this for the benefit of future travellers who may be far more competent judges of such matters than I can pretend to be. If we are to have drawings of the mosques, I hope the vaults will not be omitted.

You will observe that I have contented myself with a simple statement of facts, without attempting anything more. Yet I cannot conclude this letter without saying a word or two on the remarkable event to which it relates.

The admission of Christians to the grounds on which the Temple of God stood in ancient days, must have in it something far more important than the slender gratification it may have afforded to the curiosity, or perhaps the vanity, of those who in the first instance enjoyed the privilege. It suggests some grave questions; and the first is, why have Christians as well as Jews been so long excluded from a spot so interesting to both? So far as regards Christians, the Mohammedans acknowledge all the facts of Gospel history, and do not admit a Jew to a profession of their faith till he has owned Jesus as the true Messiah; and, with respect to the localities, it is worthy of notice that the very circumstance which makes the Harám so sacred in the eyes of the Moslems, is the fact that these grounds are associated with the most solemn incidents of patriarchal and Jewish history,—Abraham's offering of Isaac, David choosing this spot for the temple under Divine guidance, and Solomon having built it there according to the instructions he received from God. Yet, after all, the thing is not so very strange and unaccountable. It was when the Christian Church was sinking, or rather had sunk, into the deepest degradation, when it courted alliance and borrowed help from heathenism in all its forms, it was when Judaism was so overlaid by vain traditions, that the great principles of Patriarchal and Mosaic faith were to all appearance utterly stifled, that Mohammedanism took its rise. But for this, humanly speaking, it would never have sprung up. So that, as Mohammed was a providential rebuke to both, so also is their long exclusion from a place to which they both must needs look with intense regard. But, as regards Christians and the Christian Church, there is also mercy in this Divine arrangement; for, had they been in possession of the temple grounds, it is impossible to say what extravagances and excess of riot and crime might not have been committed under the profession of the Gospel. It was on the Saturday afternoon, the day before what is called Easter Sunday, that we visited the mosques. On the former part of that very day, and on the day preceding (Good Friday), we witnessed scenes in the Church of the Sepulchre which were a signal dishonour to the name of the Saviour. I do not refer to the imposture of the Greek fire, which the patriarch and his emissaries identified themselves with, or rather practised; but to the rioting that took place within the Church on both days. To say that it was like a fair would be to say nothing at all. The fact that there were strong bands of Turkish soldiers guarding the entrance, and others marshalled in the church, is enough. They were there to protect and preserve human life. Now, had the temple grounds been in the hands of such parties—had Jerusalem been in the possession of these ruffian Christians (I can give them, I grieve to say, no better name), the effects would have been most withering.

Another question yet suggests itself, which it is far more easy to state than to answer. Looking to the signs of the times, we naturally ask why this apparent relaxation of Mohammedan severity? Is it designed as a providential rebuke to the intolerant, persecuting, or exclusive spirit of various branches of the Christian Church both in the East and West? Or is it that our eyes may be directed with more earnestness to the whole human family as the objects of our solicitude? I cannot presume to indulge in such inquiries, for I keep in mind that you ask from me not speculations but facts. My store of these being now exhausted, I close this letter, expressing deep regret that, in so far as I am concerned, it must be so unsatisfactory to you and the readers of your

volume.—With every assurance of regard, I am, my dear Dr Stewart, ever faithfully yours,

PATRICK CLASON.

*Postscript.*—Since writing the above, a gentleman who was of the party admitted to the mosque, has favoured me with the following extracts from his journal, which supply some additional details regarding the interior of these buildings :—

‘*Saturday, 7th April 1855.* . . The whole company who entered the mosque, together with the Duke’s attendants, must have been upwards of 100. The Mosque el Sakharah, or the “Dome of the Rock” (commonly called the Mosque of Omar), is the most prominent building of the Harám, or sacred enclosure, and stands upon the middle of an extensive platform. At the foot of the stairs leading up the platform we were required to take off our shoes. Many of the party had provided themselves with yellow slippers; but those of us who were not so well provided, had to walk in our stockings. The lower part of the walls of this principal mosque, the Sakharah, have been of coloured marble slabs in pannels; but they are so much blackened, that, at a distance they appear like a light-coloured limestone. The upper part of the walls are of a dark colour, being covered with dark tiles of ornamental pattern; and, along the top of the wall an Arabic inscription forms the decoration. The plan of the building is octagonal. On some of the sides the tiles are in a very imperfect state; on some, they are entirely stripped off, for the coating of the walls seems to be undergoing repairs; while on others, the tiles have been quite restored, and present a beautiful appearance. Blue with red seem to be the prevailing colours. The building is surmounted with a dome, and the whole structure is considered to be of very elegant proportions.

‘The interior of this mosque is different from any others that I have witnessed. It is very dark. Looking at it from the outside there appears to be many windows: but these must either be closed or else screened by the deeply-coloured glass. Then the interior does not present a clear open space. The cloister outside is screened from the inner area; and this again is occupied by a large rock with a railing round it. This sacred stone, they say, would be suspended in the air if the supports were removed; and many other nonsensical superstitions are connected with it. The interior decoration of the El Sakharah is elegant, though neither striking nor brilliant. It is either Mosaic work or imitation. I did not particularly notice the materials. But its effect is produced by small portions of bright colours beautifully blended. The ceilings are geometrical lattice work patterns, brightly coloured. In the ceiling, I think, red prevailed. Within the sacred rock is a cave or chamber within which are contained many sacred spots, and many mystical virtues are lodged within it. . .

‘We then went to the Mosque El Aksa, which is a building of Byzantine architecture, and was originally a Christian church; at the left hand corner of this is a plain white-washed apartment, which is the original Mosque of Omar. The south end of the Mosque of El Aksa, which looks towards Mecca, is very like in its general appearance to the chancel of a church. At the junction of the nave and transepts is a dome, and the decorations reminded one of St

Sophia. The columns are of marble polished, and the spandrils are gilded Mosaics. There are two pillars for testing those who have received bribes, who say cannot pass between the two pillars, so also there is another pair of pillars between which liars cannot pass. There also is a small foot-print which they call that of Jesus Christ, while in the Mosque of El Sakharah there was the large foot-print of Mahomet.

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## LIST OF ERRATA.

Page 31	line 17 from top	<i>for</i> Yakoud <i>read</i> Yahoud
" 37	line 22 from top	<i>for</i> Sagousa <i>read</i> Lagousa
" 40	line 3 from foot	<i>for</i> midway <i>read</i> midday
" 47	line 18 from top	<i>for</i> Arabic <i>read</i> Arabian
" 57	line 11 from foot	<i>for</i> foes <i>read</i> forces
" 71	line 10 from foot	<i>for</i> head <i>read</i> mouth
" 95	line 2 from foot	<i>for</i> شير <i>read</i> سير Ser
" 134	line 2 from top	<i>for</i> it is that <i>read</i> that it is
" 138	line 4 from foot	<i>for</i> theory <i>read</i> thing
" 139	line 5 from top	<i>for</i> below <i>read</i> behind
" 187	line 8 from top	<i>for</i> sown, and <i>read</i> sown. I
" 220	line 18 from foot	<i>for</i> butm <i>read</i> zúkkúm
" 220	line 6 from foot	<i>for</i> Buy <i>read</i> Burj
" 221	line 6 from foot	<i>for</i> younger <i>read</i> young
" 250	line 12 from top	<i>for</i> when <i>read</i> where
" 257	line 3 from top	<i>for</i> any <i>read</i> an
" 257	line 4 from top	<i>for</i> even <i>read</i> ever
" 303	line 3 from foot	<i>for</i> inevitable. <i>read</i> inevitable,
" 316	line 20 from foot	<i>for</i> el Nahr <i>read</i> en Nar
" 354	line 14 from top	<i>for</i> Gaza <i>read</i> Yaffa
" 379	line 11 and 12 from top	<i>for</i> Teshkah <i>read</i> Feshkah
" 379	line 12 from foot	<i>for</i> Herod or the Romans, at <i>read</i> Herod, or the Romans at
" 395	line 6 from top	<i>for</i> Dr Prince <i>read</i> Dr Prime
" 400	line 19 from foot	<i>delete</i> "on"
" 464	line 21 from foot	<i>for</i> Ansarii <i>read</i> Ansarii

THE END.

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